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SCOTT'S NARRATIVE POETRY

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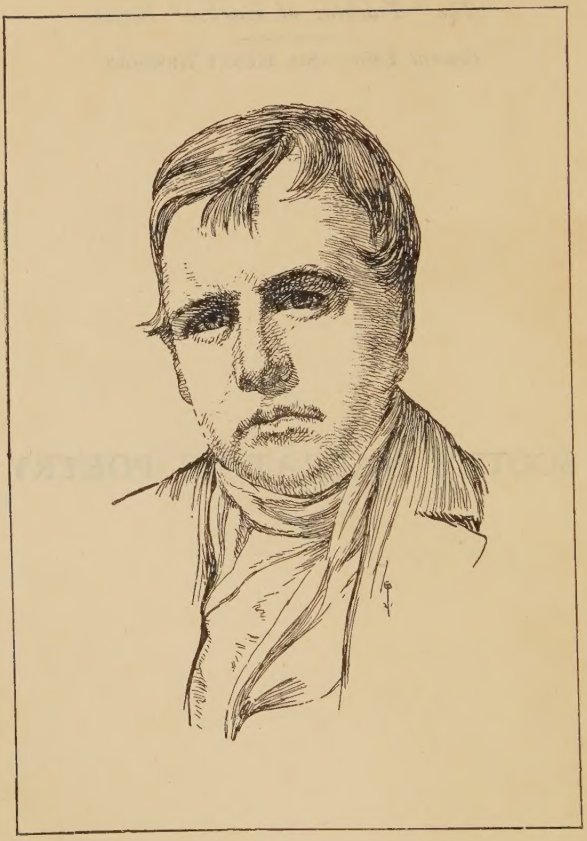

SCOTT AT THIRTY-EIGHT

From a pen-drawing by
E. Heber Thompson

Scott's Narrative Poetry

Being abridgments of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, and *The Lady of the Lake*

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CONTENTS

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL:

INTRODUCTION 7
ABRIDGED TEXT 17
QUESTIONS 80

MARMION, A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD:

INTRODUCTION 85
ABRIDGED TEXT 87
QUESTIONS 166

THE LADY OF THE LAKE:

INTRODUCTION 171
ABRIDGED TEXT 175
QUESTIONS 252

" Sound, sound the clarion ! fill the fife !
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name."—SCOTT.
(*After T. D. Mordaunt.*)

SCOTT'S NARRATIVE POETRY

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

INTRODUCTION

" I am sensible that if there be anything good about my poetry or prose either, it is a hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active dispositions."—SCOTT.

I.—The Author

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771–1832) was all his life a schoolboy. He liked the things a schoolboy likes, and he lived an active, successful life that every healthy schoolboy must envy. Born of a riding, fighting Border stock—his father was the first of the family to settle in a town—he was as manly and risk-loving as the bravest of his ancestors, though amongst them were numbered on his father's side Auld Wat of Harden (a character in the *Lay*), and on his mother's the Sir John Swinton who defeated the Duke of Clarence at Beaugé, in Henry V.'s reign.

Though born in Edinburgh, he was no city-bred lad; for a fever, when he was eighteen months old, leaving his right leg useless, he was sent to live in the country, where he might perhaps hope for a complete

cure. Until his eighth year, therefore, his home was with his grandfather Scott at Sandy-Knowe, a romantic spot near Melrose. Everything there was congenial. The grandfather was a "character," famous for having early in life doubled his capital through taking a mad risk and buying with a borrowed £30 a racehorse instead of a flock of sheep. His grandmother possessed a store of tales of the old days when the Scotts had been ever foremost in Border frays, and there were cattle-stealings, family feuds, witches, and hobgoblins. The boy having a wonderful memory and a romantic disposition, he never forgot the stories, down to the minutest detail. Moreover, he lived the old Borderers into the scenery around him. The green slopes, purple hills, and ruined towers became for him the instant scenes of raids, single combats, and escapes: indeed some neighbouring crags were the scene of his own narrow escape, as the nurse from Edinburgh—fortunately dismissed in time—crazily intended to do him to death there, and bury him in the moss! Most happily did he spend his days in the open air beside the sheep and cattle with "Auld Sandy Ormistoun, the Cow-bailie," forming a lasting passion for the colour and appearance of clouds, cliffs, torrents, and solitary moorlands that to-day we merely patronize on our holiday picnics.

He grew up into a high-spirited lad, good-tempered, freedom-loving, and fond of sport. He early galloped about on a Shetland pony. There was nothing namby-pamby about him if he did constantly recite old ballads—and he recited them so noisily that even the clergyman's voice could not be heard for the din. In spite of his lame leg—it was never entirely cured—he roughed things, and got about, for he was uncommonly strong, more than most lads with sound limbs. He had the keenest sight, so that in later days his little son was heard to declare, "It was commonly

him that saw the hare sitting." In short, it was as if he had been one of the old Borderers and Mosstroopers, half-soldier and half-farmer, of the sixteenth century, come to life again, with the addition of a tender heart, genius for writing, and an understanding affection for the English. To-day he would have been a Boy Scout. In the Great War he would have died in action, a major-general. However, living in the reign of George III. and not Henry VIII., he could not still follow the habits and customs of an Auld Wat of Harden. He did the next best thing. He lived them over again in imagination, and translated them for us into words, writing poems and romances that will never die. He was a born storyteller, one of the greatest in the world.

A story told of him when he was six will show still further the kind of boy he was. " He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on: it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. ' There's the mast gone,' says he ; ' crash it goes ; they will all perish.' After his agitation he turns to me, ' That is too melancholy,' says he ; ' I had better read you something more amusing.' " After the lady had gone, Walter told his aunt how much he had liked her, because " she was a *virtuoso* like himself." " Dear Walter," says Aunt Jenny, " what is a *virtuoso* ? " " Don't ye know ? Why, it's one who wishes and will know everything."

In his eighth year he was sent to the High School at Edinburgh, and even there he shone as a storyteller, if as nothing else. He remained six years. After leaving school he spent six months with an aunt on the Border, at Kelso ; and while there he made a discovery that was to influence his whole life. This was a book that he chanced upon, called Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (published in 1764). It proved exactly what he needed to inspire his

imagination. No longer was he dependent on old Border Ballads recited crudely after imperfect handing down from generation to generation, for here in plenty were ballads from all quarters, printed, and accurately edited by a scholarly bishop! Henceforth he was to think no toil or drudgery too hard to endure in following out his antiquarian hobbies. Here is his own account of the event: "The summer day sped onward so fast, that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and remember was in this instance the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm. . . . To this period also I can trace distinctly the awakening of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects which has never since deserted me."

In 1785, in his fourteenth year, he passed on to the University of Edinburgh; he also became apprenticed to his father, a lawyer, or Writer to the Signet. He would have been a soldier but for his lameness; however, he made the best of his studies, and in 1792 was called to the Scottish Bar. Through all his student days he kept up his ballad-collecting, and regularly made a "raid" or tour in vacation time through one Border dale or another.

In 1797, when a Napoleonic invasion was feared, one of his Edinburgh friends organized a Volunteer cavalry force, which Scott joined, becoming Quartermaster. At last he could play the warrior; and he

thoroughly enjoyed dashing up and down on horseback during manœuvres, or keeping everybody in good humour with his ready tongue and inexhaustible fund of stories, while unconsciously qualifying as a poet of the glamour of war.

In 1797 he married a Frenchwoman, Mlle. Charpentier, a Royalist; and some two years later took up the appointment of Sheriff of Selkirk. The sheriff had to reside at least four months of each year in his county, so Scott went to live in a small farmhouse on the Tweed, amidst his favourite hill scenery. Now he was indeed a Borderer. Moreover in his new post he found abundant leisure for his hobbies, and soon published a collection of ballads, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, which met with considerable success (four volumes, 1802–3). Many of the ballads he had written himself, in imitation of the genuine old ones; and he began to shape out a long poem of his own, ballad-like in freedom and theme, to revive the glories, as he believed them to be, of his beloved Borders in centuries gone by. Such a poem was *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The first part was written in curious circumstances. In 1802 Scott was kicked by a horse while he was charging with the Volunteer cavalry on the sands at Portobello (near Edinburgh). Confined to bed for a fortnight, in lodgings close by, he whiled away the time by composing Canto I. of the *Lay*. The poem came out in 1805, when Scott was thirty-four. It became at once the greatest success of any poem in the language, and Scott had achieved fame at a blow.

He might have made a great lawyer if he had given all his heart to the task; but from this time forth his heart was in literature, and law took a second place among his interests.

II.—How the "Lay" took Shape

Scott was hail-fellow-well-met with every one on the Borders, and particularly cultivated the innumerable offshoots of the Scott clan, from the lowliest to the chief, that of the Buccleuchs. No one encouraged his love of Border lore to better effect than these last, the beautiful Countess of Dalkeith, afterwards Harriet Duchess of Buccleuch, herself taking a keen interest in all the old legends pertaining to her estate. One day an old tenant told her the story of a goblin, one Gilpin Horner. This Horner, he said, was a mysterious, misshapen being who had once made his appearance at a lonely farm in the district, crying out "Tint! Tint! Tint!" (*i.e.* Lost!), and badly scaring the luckless beings who first encountered him. However he settled down peaceably amongst them, his constant mischievous tricks alone reminding them of his suspicious origin. One evening, while the women were milking the cows, Gilpin was playing with the children close by when a piercing voice thrice called out, "Gilpin Horner." Gilpin started at the sound, and crying aloud, "That is me, I must away," instantly vanished, never to be seen again. The old man who told this story quite believed it; and the young Countess was so delighted with it that she pressed Scott to take it as the subject of his next ballad.

But it was a flimsy story to form the theme of a whole poem. Some more important incident would have to be chosen, and connected with the adventures of Horner. Scott bethought himself of the celebrated feud of the Scotts and Carrs, which was suitable as a piece of history, and flattering to the family pride which was so prominent a trait in his character. The feud went back to the early days of the reign of

James V. of Scotland, when he, still a minor, chafed under the control of the Earl of Angus, chief of the Douglases. Once while at Melrose James sent a secret letter to the Laird of Buccleuch, a Scott, requesting a rescue party to deliver him out of the hands of the Douglas. Buccleuch made the vain attempt, Carr of Cessford pursuing him from the field till Elliot of Stobs, a follower of Buccleuch, turned at the foot of a steep path and slew Carr with his lance. His death ended the pursuit, but started a bitter feud between the two families. Deeds of violence ensued, culminating in 1552 in the murder in the streets of Edinburgh of Sir Walter Scott, husband of the Ladye in the *Lay*. The feud came, however, to a romantic end. For while Janet Beatoune, Lady Buccleuch, five years after her husband's murder, made an attempt to kidnap Sir Peter Cranstoun (chief of the Carrs) at the Chapel of St. Mary of the Lowes, this very Sir Peter, who escaped in time (or else his son), nevertheless married a daughter of Lady Buccleuch, and peace was restored.

This story, which offers the romancer such good materials for a happy ending, Scott neatly turned to account as the main plot of the *Lay*. The poem opens just after Sir Walter has been murdered. His widow, the Ladye of Branksome, lives for revenge upon the Carrs, while her daughter, Margaret, is secretly in love with their chief, Lord Cranstoun. The Ladye fiercely maintains the feud even though she knows the Mountain Spirit has declared to the River Spirit that the stars will not deign to shed a kindly influence upon the Scotts,

> " On Teviot's tide and Branksome's Tower,
> Till pride be quell'd, and love be free "—

that is, till the Ladye forgive the Carrs and Margaret be allowed to wed Cranstoun.

The poem then works out the problem of changing the Ladye's heart, and ending the feud, through the machinations of Gilpin Horner, the Goblin Page of Cranstoun. Horner is thus a central figure, but not the real subject of the poem. You must decide for yourself whether he is a very convincing sort of personage, and whether he would have been greatly missed if he had never appeared in the poem.

Scott had found that an ordinary ballad did not attract a very large reading public. But happening to hear a friend recite a long unpublished poem of Coleridge called *Christabel*, in which the verse was enlivened by continual variation of metre and sound, he decided that this was the kind of poem for him—a romance written in such a style that the sound should be an echo to the sense. Only, the kind of romance he meant would have to be full of the out-of-date words of a period well before Shakespeare; and that would make it too hard for a modern audience.

There was one way out. The last recorded minstrel on the Borders had been a certain Nicol Burne, who had lived in Ettrickdale under the protection of the Scotts of Thirlestane, and had died as late as 1690. Why not, then, imagine such a minstrel reciting an old romance in the language of his own day, which was modern? Such a minstrel would be interesting in himself, and his description would form a sort of poem around the poem. And so the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* came into being.

III.—Data for starting on the "Lay."

(*a*) Time and Place of *Introduction*: The Old Harper.

Time: 1690, in the reign of William III. and Mary.

Place: Newark Castle on the Yarrow near Selkirk.

An old Harper, pupil of Rattling Roaring Willie

and the last remaining of those figures once so popular and highly honoured in court and castle, is reduced in his infirm old age to playing from house to house ; and now, after a wearying day, he has sought shelter in Newark Castle. Received hospitably by the Duchess of Buccleuch, widow of the ill-fated James, Duke of Monmouth, he shows his gratitude by singing to her a lay, or poem intended to be sung, on the subject of her own family in days gone by.

(*b*) Time and place of the *Lay*.

Time : The three days commencing September 29, 1552, in the reigns of James V. of Scotland and Edward VI. of England.

Place : The poem opens in the evening, after the meal of the day is over, at the Scotts' castle of Branksome, near Hawick, Roxburghshire.

(*c*) Text.

As with that of the other poems in this book, the text has been abridged so as to omit lengthy descriptive passages. Scott was anxious to illustrate Border customs and manners as well as to tell a story, and often erred by introducing more local detail than the poem required ; so nothing essential to the story and the appreciation of Scott's poetry has been omitted.

(*d*) Family Names.

The several members of the Scott clan are called after their estates or holdings—*e.g.* Auld Wat of Harden is Walter Scott of Harden, William of Deloraine is Sir William Scott of Deloraine, Whitslade is Scott of Whitslade. To his friends Sir Walter Scott himself was known as Abbotsford.

(*e*) Maps.

The reader will find the story much clearer if he draws a map of the Borders, covering the counties of Cumberland, Dumfries, Selkirk, Roxburgh, Berwick, and Peebles, and enters the places mentioned in the poem.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

INTRODUCTION

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old ;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses grey,
Seem'd to have known a better day ;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry ;
For, welladay ! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead ;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn ;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay :
Old times were changed, old manners gone ;
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne ;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door.
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower ;
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh,
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well :
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree ;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb !

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride :
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him, God !
A braver ne'er to battle rode ;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch :
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd ;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.

But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied :
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please ;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain !
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls ;
He had play'd it to King Charles the Good,
When he kept court in Holyrood ;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled ;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy !
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along :
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot :
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost ;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,

King Charles the Good, Charles I.

The poet's glowing thought supplied ;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

CANTO FIRST

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower ;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well !
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all ;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire :
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall ;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall ;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all :
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel :
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night :
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,

Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard ;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barr'd.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten ;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow ;
A hundred more fed free in stall :—
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight ?
Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night ?—
They watch, to hear the bloodhound baying :
They watch to hear the war-horn braying ;
To see St. George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming :
They watch, against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

Such is the custom of Branksome Hall.—
Many a valiant knight is here ;
But he, the chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell
How Lord Walter fell !
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war ;

Wight, Strong. *Jedwood-axe*, Battle-axe with long shaft.
Dight, Prepared. *Merry*, Bustling, stirring.

When the streets of high Dunedin
Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's deadly yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity ?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity ?
No ! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage, they drew ;
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions slew :
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot !

In sorrow, o'er Lord Walter's bier
The warlike foresters had bent ;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent :
But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear !
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
Had lock'd the source of softer woe ;
And burning pride, and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow ;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
" And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be ! "
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

Falchion, Curved sword. *Slogan*, The clan's war-cry.

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,
And wept in wild despair.
But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied ;
For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
Had lent their mingled tide :
Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
All purple with their blood ;
And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

The Ladye of Branksome hears the Spirit of the river Teviot in converse with the Spirit of the neighbouring Mountains, and with her knowledge of magic she can understand the words they say.

RIVER SPIRIT

" Tears of an imprison'd maiden
Mix with my polluted stream ;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars ?
What shall be the maiden's fate ?
Who shall be the maiden's mate ? "—

When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran, At the battle of Melrose, 1526.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

" Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness round the pole ;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim ;
Orion's studded belt is dim ;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star ;
  Ill may I read their high decree !
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
  Till pride be quell'd, and love be free."

The unearthly voices ceast,—
  And the heavy sound was still ;
It died on the river's breast,
  It died on the side of the hill.—
But round Lord David's tower
  The sound still floated near ;
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
  And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
She raised her stately head,
  And her heart throbb'd high with pride :—
" Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
  Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride ! "

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
  Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them all,
  Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy
  The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall, right merrily,
  In mimic foray rode.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more ;
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
As she paused at the arched door ;
Then from amid the armed train,
She call'd to her William of Deloraine.

In the hope of resisting and changing the decree of the stars, the Ladye wished to consult the Magic Book of the famous wizard, Michael Scott; and she bethought her of sending William of Deloraine to fetch it.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee ;
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross ;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best bloodhounds ;
In Eske or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one ;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride ;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime :
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland ;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

" Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed ;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside ;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

Moss-trooping, Making forays over the Border morasses.
Prime, Early.

Greet the Father well from me ;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb :
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright ;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

" What he gives thee, see thou keep ;
Stay not thou for food or sleep :
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look ;
If thou readest, thou art lorn !
Better hadst thou ne'er been born."—

" O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear ;
Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
" Again will I be here :
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me ;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod ;

The Cross, In the stained-glass window, reflecting on the floor.
Neck-verse at Hairibee, Ps. li., i. If a prisoner could read this verse, by benefit of clergy he escaped hanging. Hairibee was the place of Border executions, near Carlisle.
Barbican, Towered archway at outer entrance to a castle.
Basnet, Helmet.

In Hawick twinkled many a light ;
Behind him soon they set in night ;
And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark ;—
" Stand, ho ! thou courier of the dark."—
" For Branksome, ho ! " the knight rejoin'd
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turn'd him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill ;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.

Unchalleng'd, thence pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come ;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain ! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow ;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen ;
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail ;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray ;

Barded, Armoured. *Counter*, Chest.

Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gain'd the landing-place.

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon ;
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallow'd morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes ;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day ;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past ;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran :
Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all :
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

Here paused the harp ; and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell ;

Harp, The Eolian harp, a box fitted with strings, sounded by a wind passing over them.

Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,
He seem'd to seek, in every eye,
If they approved his minstrelsy ;
And, diffident of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age, and wand'ring long,
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
And every gentle lady there,
Each after each, in due degree,
Gave praises to his melody ;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they long'd the rest to hear.
Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight ;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white ;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin'd central tower ;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory ;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die ;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile ;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair !

Short halt did Delorame make there!
Little reck'd he of the scene so fair:
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate—
"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"
"From Branksome I," the warrior cried:
And straight the wicket open'd wide.
For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood,
To fence the rights of fair Melrose;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

Bold Delorame his errand said;
The porter bent his humble head;
With torch in hand, and foot unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod;
The arched cloister, far and wide
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He entered the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
Says, that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."
From sackcloth couch the Monk arose,
With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd,
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

And strangely on the Knight look'd he,
And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide;
"And, darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?

Aventayle, Visor of the helmet.

My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn ;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn :
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Would'st thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring Warrior, follow me ! "—

" Penance, father, will I none ;
Prayer know I hardly one ;
For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.
Other prayer can I none ;
So speed me my errand, and let me be gone."—

Again on the Knight look'd the Churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily ;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that were long since by
When his limbs were strong, and his courage was high :—
Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloister'd round, the garden lay ;
The pillar'd arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

By a steel-clinched postern door,
They enter'd now the chancel tall ;
The darken'd roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small.
They sate them down on a marble stone,—
(A Scottish monarch slept below ;)

Drie, Suffer, put up with.

Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone :—
" I was not always a man of woe ;
For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God :
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

" In these far climes, it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott :
A wizard, of such dreaded fame,
That when, in Salamanca's cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame !
Some of his skill he taught to me ;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone :
But to speak them were a deadly sin ;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

" When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened :
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed :
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said,
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid ;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

Michael Scott, Sir, of Balwearie, lived a century before the time attributed to him in the poem. Learned in strange sciences like alchemy, he was regarded as a magician. His books of magic were believed to be buried with him.

Salamanca's cave, Cavern in Salamanca, where the science of magic was taught.

" I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look ;
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his Chief of Branksome's need :
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright,
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

" It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid !
Strange sounds along the chancel pass'd,
The banners waved without a blast "—
—Still spoke the Monk, when the bell toll'd one !—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed ;
Yet somewhat was he chill'd with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

" Lo, Warrior ! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead ;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night :
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."—
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flagstone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon :
He pointed to a secret nook ;
An iron bar the Warrior took ;
And the Monk made a sign with his wither'd hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

St. Michael's night, 29th September.

With beating heart to the task he went ;
His sinewy frame o'er the gravestone bent ;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof !
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright :
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume.

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old ;
A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea :
His left hand held his Book of Might ;
A silver cross was in his right ;
The lamp was placed beside his knee :
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face :
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,

Amice, Cape lined with fur.
Wrought baldric, Embroidered sword-belt hung from shoulder to hip.

And neither known remorse nor awe ;
Yet now remorse and awe he own'd ;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw.
Bewilder'd and unnerved he stood,
And the priest pray'd fervently and loud :
With eyes averted prayed he ;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

And when the priest his death-prayer had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said :—
" Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue ;
For those thou may'st not look upon
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone ! "—
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound :
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd ;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the Warrior's sight.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night return'd in double gloom ;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few ;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the blast ;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices, unlike the voice of man ;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to-day.

I cannot tell how the truth may be ;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

" Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
" And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done ! "—
The monk return'd him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped ;
When the convent met at the noontide bell—
The monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead !
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he pray'd.

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find :
He was glad when he pass'd the tombstones grey,
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye ;
For the mystic Book, to his bosom prest,
Felt like a load upon his breast ;
And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
Full fain was he when the dawn of day
Began to brighten Cheviot grey ;
He joy'd to see the cheerful light,
And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

. . . . . .

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey,
The sun had brighten'd the Carter's side ;
And soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome Towers and Teviot's tide.
The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And waken'd every flower that blows ;
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,

She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
And don her kirtle so hastilie?
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie?
Why does she stop, and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair?
And why does she pat the shaggy bloodhound,
As he rouses him up from his lair?
And, though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

The ladye steps in doubt and dread,
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
The lady caresses the rough bloodhound,
Lest his voice should waken the castle round;
The watchman's bugle is not blown,
For he was her foster-father's son;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn-light
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

The Knight and ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, and young, and tall;
Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair
With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

Kirtle, Tunic. *Foster-father*, Husband of her babyhood's nurse.

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
And held his crested helm and spear :
That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
Through all the Border, far and near.
'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
He heard a voice cry, " Lost ! lost ! lost ! "
And, like tennis-ball by racket toss'd,
A leap, of thirty feet and three,
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd ;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company ;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

Use lessens marvel, it is said :
This elvish Dwarf with the Baron staid ;
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock :
And oft apart his arms he toss'd,
And often mutter'd " Lost ! lost ! lost ! "
He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
But well Lord Cranstoun served he :
And he of his service was full fain ;
For once he had been ta'en or slain,
An it had not been for his ministry.
All between Home and Hermitage,
Talk'd of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

And now, in Branksome's good greenwood,
As under the aged oak he stood,

Litherlie, Lazy.

The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly ;
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret, through the hazel grove,
Flew like the startled cushat-dove :
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein ;
Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

While thus he pour'd the lengthen'd tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail :
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the wither'd hand of age
A goblet, crown'd with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop fill'd his eye,
Pray'd God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheer'd a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the minstrel quaff'd ;
And he, embolden'd by the draught,
Look'd gaily back to them, and laugh'd.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swell'd his old veins, and cheer'd his soul ;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

Cushat-dove, Wood-pigeon. *Velez*, Near Malaga, Spain.

CANTO THIRD

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed ;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed ;
In halls, in gay attire is seen ;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above ;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
But the page shouted wild and shrill,
And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill
A stately knight came pricking on.
That warrior's steed, so dapple-grey,
Was dark with sweat, and splashed with clay ;
His armour red with many a stain :
He seem'd in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the live-long night ;
For it was William of Deloraine.

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He mark'd the crane on the Baron's crest ;
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That mark'd the foemen's feudal hate ;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seem'd to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire, when wheel'd around,
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

In rapid round the Baron bent ;
He sigh'd a sigh, and pray'd a prayer ;
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye faire.
Stout Deloraine nor sigh'd nor pray'd,
Nor saint, nor ladye, call'd to aid ;
But he stoop'd his head, and couch'd his spear,
And spurred his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent !
The stately Baron backwards bent ;
Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
And his plumes went scattering on the gale ;
The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail ;
Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,
Deep in his bosom broke at last.—
Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,
Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward pass'd his course ;
Nor knew—so giddy roll'd his brain—
His foe lay stretch'd upon the plain.

But when he rein'd his courser round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to stanch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay,

Jack, Leather jacket studded with iron plates.
Acton, Leather coat under the jack.

And tend him in his doubtful state,
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate :
His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
" This shalt thou do without delay :
No longer here myself may stay ;
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift will be at my dying day."

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode ;
The Goblin Page behind abode ;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corslet off he took,
The dwarf espied the Mighty Book !
Much he marvell'd a knight of pride
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride :
He thought not to search or stanch the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp :
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore ;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read.
It had much of glamour might,
Could make a ladye seem a knight ;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall ;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling seem a palace large,

Sheeling, Shepherd's hut.

And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth.

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head ;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
" Man of age, thou smitest sore ! "—
No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry ;
The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak.—
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive ;
It was not given by man alive.

Unwillingly himself he address'd,
To do his master's high behest :
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse ;
He led him into Branksome Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all ;
And each did after swear and say,
There only pass'd a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower ;
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramarye
Was always done maliciously ;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

Mot, May. *Gramarye*, Magic.

As he repass'd the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport :
He thought to train him to the wood ;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play ;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook ;
The running stream dissolved the spell,
And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child ;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen :
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited ;
So he but scowl'd on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild ;
The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,
And laugh'd, and shouted, " Lost ! lost ! lost ! '

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower ;
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He fear'd to see that grisly face
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,

Train, Entice. *Vilde*, Vile.

And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

And hark ! and hark ! the deep-mouth'd bark
  Comes nigher still, and nigher :
Bursts on the path a dark bloodhound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
  And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wilder'd child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire !
He faced the bloodhound manfully,
And held his little bat on high :
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
  But still in act to spring ;
When dash'd an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stay'd,
  He drew his tough bow-string ;
But a rough voice cried, " Shoot not, hoy !
Ho ! shoot not, Edward—'Tis a boy ! "

The speaker issued from the wood,
And check'd his fellow's surly mood,
  And quell'd the ban-dog's ire :
He was an English yeoman good,
  And born in Lancashire.
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
  Five hundred feet him fro ;
With hand more true, and eye more clear,
  No archer bended bow.

Bat, Cudgel. *Ban-dog*, A " tethered dog "—generally a mastiff.

His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
  Set off his sun-burn'd face :
Old England's sign, St. George's cross,
  His barret-cap did grace ;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
  All in a wolf-skin baldric tied ;
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee ;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
" Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
" Edward, methinks we have a prize !
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Show he is come of high degree."—

" Yes ! I am come of high degree,
  For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch ;
And, if thou dost not set me free,
  False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue !
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at need,
And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed ;
And, if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow ! "—

" Gramercy, for thy goodwill, fair boy !
My mind was never set so high ;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,
  Our wardens had need to keep good order ;

Barret-cap, A flat cap.

My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
Thou'lt make them work upon the Border.
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see ;
I think our work is well begun,
When we have taken thy father's son."

Although the child was led away,
In Branksome still he seem'd to stay,
For so the Dwarf his part did play ;
And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinch'd, and beat, and overthrew ;
Nay, some of them he wellnigh slew.
He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire.
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,
And woefully scorch'd the hackbuteer.
It may be hardly thought or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guess'd,
That the young Baron was possess'd !

Well I ween the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispell'd ;
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.
Much she wonder'd to find him lie
On the stone threshold stretch'd along ;
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong :
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the Book had read ;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

Tire, Head-dress. *Hackbuteer*, Musketeer.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch'd the blood ;
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound :
No longer by his couch she stood ;
But she has ta'en the broken lance,
And wash'd it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene'er she turn'd it round and round,
Twisted as if she gall'd his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toil'd ; for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

So pass'd the day—the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell ;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm ;
E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.

. . . . . .

Is yon red glare the western star ?—
O, 'tis the beacon-blaze of war !
The Warder view'd it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long.
The blast alarm'd the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all ;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was redden'd by the torches' glare,

Salved the splinter, Smeared ointment on the lance, not the wound —she was working magic.
Warder, Warden of the Scottish Marches.

Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud :—
" On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,
And three are kindling on Priesthaughswire ;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout !
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man !
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale ;
For when they see the blazing bale,
Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life !
And warn the Warder of the strife.
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise."

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats, with clamour dread,
The ready horsemen sprung :
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out ! and out !
In hasty route,
The horsemen gallop'd forth ;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,
And ruddy blush'd the heaven :
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,

Bale, A fagot. *Need-fire*, Beacon, only lit in emergency.

Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
All flaring and uneven ;
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen ;
Each with warlike tidings fraught ;
Each from each the signal caught ;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel ;
The castle-bell, with backward clang,
Sent forth the larum peal ;
Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower ;
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watchword from the sleepless ward ;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Bloodhound and ban-dog yell'd within.

Ceased the high sound—the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song ;
And marvel much, in helpless age,
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer ;
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way ?
" Ay, once he had—but he was dead ! "—
Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
And busied himself the strings withal,
To hide the tear that fain would fall.

CANTO FOURTH

There is a general rush to refuge. It is not yet known who the foe may be. At length Watt Tinlinn arrives at Branksome with news, and addresses the Ladye.

"Belted Will Howard is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear:
They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burn'd my little lonely tower:
The fiend receive their souls therefor!
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barnyard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight;
But I was chased the livelong night.
Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
Fast upon my traces came.
Until I turn'd at Priesthaugh Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
I had him long at high despite:
He drove my cows last Fastern's night."

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
Three thousand armed Englishmen—
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
There was saddling and mounting in haste,
There was pricking o'er moor and lea;

Fastern's night, Shrove Tuesday.

He that was last at the trysting-place
Was but lightly held of his gay ladye.

Then came John of Thirlestane, brave old Wat of Harden, and the Scotts of Eskdale; Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw; and a host of others.

The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose:
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes.
"The boy is ripe to look on war;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar
The raven's nest upon the cliff;
The red cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest:
Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield."

Well may you think, the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shriek'd, and shed full many a tear,
And moan'd and plain'd in manner wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
That wont to be so free and bold.
Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blush'd blood-red for very shame:—
"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—

Rangleburn. Buccleuch Castle stood on the banks of the Rangle burn.

Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should e'er be son of mine ! "—

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile ;
But as a shallow brook they cross'd,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure changed, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, " Lost ! lost ! lost ! "
Full fast the urchin ran and laugh'd,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and through.
Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon heal'd again,
Yet, as he ran, he yell'd for pain ;
And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood ;
And martial murmurs, from below,
Proclaim'd the approaching southern foe.
Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown ;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men ;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum ;

Mickle, Much.
Scottish mile. Eight Scots miles are equivalent to nine English.
Almayn, German hired soldiers.

And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear ;
And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.

But louder still the clamour grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry ;
His men-at-arms, with glaive and spear,
Brought up the battle's glittering rear.
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen ;
With favour in his crest, or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.
So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthen'd lines display ;
Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, " St. George, for merry England ! "

Now every English eye, intent,
On Branksome's armed towers was bent ;
So near they were, that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

Glaive, Sword.
Seneschal, Chief officer of the household, and head of the castle now that the Lord was dead.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breastplate spread ;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait ;
Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to prance,
And, high curveting, slow advance :
In sign of truce, his better hand
Display'd a peeled willow wand ;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.
When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

" Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland ?
My Ladye reads you swith return ;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest,
As scare one swallow from her nest,
St. Mary ! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word :
" May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show

Curveting, Leaping. *Better hand*, Right hand.
Reads, Advises. *Swith*, Quickly.
Pursuivant-at-arms, Attendant on a herald.

Both why we came, and when we go."—
The message sped, the noble Dame
To the wall's outward circle came ;
Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
The lion argent deck'd his breast ;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view !
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said :—

" It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords ;
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border-side ;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.
We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason pain.
It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,
And storm and spoil thy garrison :

Flemens-firth, Refuge for outlaws.
March-treason, Crime against the Border laws.
St. Cuthbert's even, Evening before 20th March.
Warrison, Signal for the assault.

And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

He ceassd—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretch'd his little arms on high ;
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear ;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frown'd ;
Then, deep within her sobbing breast
She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest ;
Unalter'd and collected stood,
And thus replied, in dauntless mood :—

" Say to your Lords of high emprize,
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good,
But William may count with him kin and blood.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine ;
Through me no friend shall meet his doom ;
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.
Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high ;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,
Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim—
Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame ;

Slogan, The clan's battle-cry.
Lyke-wake, Vigil over a dead body.

His bugle Wat of Harden blew ;
Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
To heaven the Border slogan rung,
" St. Mary for the young Buccleuch ! "
The English war-cry answer'd wide,
And forward bent each southern spear ;
Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bowstring to his ear ;
Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown :—
But, ere a grey-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

" Ah ! noble Lords ! " he breathless said,
" What treason has your march betray'd ?
What make you here, from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war ?
Your foemen triumph in the thought,
That in the toils the lion's caught.
Already on dark Ruberslaw
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wander'd long ;
But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong ;
And hard I've spurr'd all night, to show
The mustering of the coming foe."

" And let them come ! " fierce Dacre cried ;
" For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers display'd,
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid !—
Level each harquebuss on row ;

Pensils and pennons, Streamers or small flags, pensils being the smaller. *Weapon-schaw*, Mobilizing of troops.
Judah's sea, Here Sea of Galilee. *Harquebuss*, Musket.

Draw, merry archers, draw the bow ;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die ! "—

" Yet hear," quoth Howard, " calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear :
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back ?
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid :
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In simple fight, and, if he gain,
He gains for us ; but if he's cross'd,
'Tis but a single warrior lost :
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother Warden's sage rebuke ;
And yet his forward step he staid,
And slow and sullenly obey'd.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride ;
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand ;
His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band ;

Bill-men, Troops armed with a sort of spear-axe.
Blanche lion, White lion, crest of the Howards.

And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight ;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said :—
" If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain :
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,
In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsay'd ;
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew
How tardy was the Regent's aid :
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be enclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle, on a lawn :
They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn ;
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

Jedwood, Jedburgh.

He paused : the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell—
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot ;
Of feuds, whose memory was not.
The Harper smiled, well-pleased ; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on poet's ear :
A simple race ! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile.
Smiled, then, well-pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH

SCARCELY the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers.
Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard ;
Bright spears, above the columns dun,
Glanced momentary to the sun ;
And feudal banners fair display'd
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

. . . . . .

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
At length the various clamours died :
And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
No sound but Teviot's rushing tide ;
Save when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell ;
And save where, through the dark profound,

The clanging axe and hammer's sound
  Rung from the nether lawn ;
For many a busy hand toil'd there,
Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
The lists' dread barriers to prepare
  Against the morrow's dawn.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
  Despite the Dame's reproving eye ;
Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
  Full many a stifled sigh ;
For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
  And many a bold ally,—
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
  In broken sleep she lay :
By times, from silken couch she rose ;
While yet the banner'd hosts repose,
  She view'd the dawning day :
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

She gazed upon the inner court,
  Which in the tower's tall shadow lay ;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
  Had rung the livelong yesterday ;
Now still as death ; till stalking slow,—
  The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior pass'd below ;
  But when he raised his plumed head—
    Blessed Mary ! can it be ?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
  With fearless step and free.

Nether lawn, Grassy space below the castle.

She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears
Shall buy his life a day.

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,
For all the vassalage:
But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had
To bring this meeting round;
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite
In such no joy is found;
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—

Queen Mary, Mary of Guise, the mother of Mary Queen of Scots.
Hermitage, A friendly castle in Liddesdale.

Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

. . . . . .

Meantime full anxious was the Dame ;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestane :
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent ;
But yet not long the strife—for, lo !
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seem'd, and free from pain,
In armour sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch.
An English knight led forth to view ;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he long'd to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride ;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field ;
While to each knight their care assign'd
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen, and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life ;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate Heralds spoke :—

ENGLISH HERALD

" Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws ;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good cause ! "

SCOTTISH HERALD

" Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat ;
And that, so help him God above !
He will on Musgrave's body prove,
He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE

" Forward, brave champions, to the fight !
Sound trumpets ! "——

LORD HOME

——" God defend the right ! "—
Then, Teviot ! how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

Despiteous scathe, Spiteful injury.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood pour'd down from many a wound ;
For desperate was the strife and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight !
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.—

'Tis done, 'tis done ! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain ;
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no !
Thence never shalt thou rise again !
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp !—
O, bootless aid !—haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire !
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven !

In haste the holy Friar sped ;—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran ;
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
He raised the dying man ;
Unheard he prays ;—the death-pang's o'er !
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

Claymore, Two-edged broadsword used anciently by Scottish Highlanders.
Gorget, Throat-armour. *Bootless*, Useless.

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands ;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the grasp
Of gratulating hands.
When lo ! strange cries of wild surprise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands ;
And all, amid the throng'd array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran :
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard look'd around,
As dizzy, and in pain ;
And all, upon the armed ground,
Knew William of Deloraine !
Each ladye sprung from seat with speed ;
Vaulted each marshal from his steed ;
" And who art thou," they cried,
" Who hast this battle fought and won ? "—
His plumed helm was soon undone—
" Cranstoun of Teviot-side !
For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
And to the Ladye led her son.

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
And often press'd him to her breast ;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbb'd at every blow ;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she greet,
Though low he kneeled at her feet,
Me lists not tell what words were made,
What Douglas, Home, and Howard said—

Beaver, Lower part of helmet.
Me lists not, It does not suit me.

For Howard was a generous foe—
And how the clan united pray'd
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
Then broke her silence stern and still,—
"Not you, but Fate, has vanquish'd me.
Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quell'd, and love is free."—
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand,
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she :—
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be ;
For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company."—

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain ;
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his page, and of the Book
Which from the wounded knight he took ;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramarye ;
How, in Sir William's armour dight,
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And linger'd till he join'd the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray

Half his tale, His meeting with Margaret in Canto I.

Her mystic arts in view of day ;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his death-like trance ;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
He greeted him right heartilie :
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
Though rude, and scant of courtesy ;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe :
And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
When on dead Musgrave he look'd down ;
Grief darken'd on his rugged brow,
Though half disguised with a frown ;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made.

" Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here !
I ween, my deadly enemy ;
For, if I slew thy brother dear,
Thou slew'st a sister's son to me ;

And when I lay in dungeon dark,
Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die :
Yet rest thee God ! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear !
'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
Cheer the dark bloodhound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray !
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield ;
On levell'd lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore.
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

The harp's wild notes, though hush'd the song,
The mimic march of death prolong ;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear ;

Snaffle, The horse bridled ready. *Spur*, The rider ready.
Spear, The rider prepared for fight. *Gear*, Plunder.
Bowning, Ready to start.

Now seems some mountain-side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep ;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale ;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous Southern Land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy :
Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
Misprized the land he loved so dear ;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land !
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign strand !
If such there breathe, go, mark him well ;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell ;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim ;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,

Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

O Caledonia ! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child !
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires ! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand !
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left ;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way ;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my wither'd cheek ;
Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

Not scorn'd like me ! to Branksome Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive call ;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war ;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron grate ;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,

They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

Me lists not at this tide declare
The splendour of the spousal rite,
How muster'd in the chapel fair
Both maid and matron, squire and knight ;
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek ;
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise !

The spousal rites were ended soon :
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest ;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine ;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy ;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humour highly cross'd,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill ;

Sewers, Officers to set and taste the dishes, waiters.

A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-sword.
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose :
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove, and shook his head.—
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold, and drench'd in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found ;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath ;
But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

The dwarf then repaired to the kitchen, and, to revenge himself on Watt Tinlinn for having shot at him, pierced his knee to the bone with a poisoned dagger. An uproar arose.

By this, the Dame, lest further fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.

First Albert Græme, a Border minstrel, sang a simple ballad about the tragic wedding of an English lady and a Scottish knight ; followed Fitztraver, Surrey's chief minstrel, with a courtly song of the Lady Geraldine ; and last sang Harold, Bard of St. Clair.

HAROLD

O listen, listen, ladies gay !
No haughty feat of arms I tell ;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

Lyme-dog, Hunting dog, held on a leash.
Rosabelle, Her surname is St. Clair.

—" Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew !
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay !
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

" The blackening wave is edged with white :
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly ;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

" Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay ;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch :
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day ? "—

" 'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

" 'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam ;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen ;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Ravensheuch. In Fife, and Roslin, near Edinburgh, were castles of the St. Clairs. *Firth*, Of Forth.
Inch, Islet. *Sea-mews*, Gulls.
The ring, Tilting at a ring hung from a beam, to carry it off on the point of the lance.
Dryden and Hawthornden, Two houses near Roslin.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale ;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle ;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle !

And each St. Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell ;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce mark'd the guests the darken'd hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all :
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog ;
Of no eclipse had sages told ;

Panoply, Complete armour.
Sacristy, Storeroom for church vessels.
Pale, Enclosed space. *Pinnet*, Pinnacle.
Candle, Consecrated taper.

And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,
Could scarce his own stretch'd hand behold.
A secret horror check'd the feast,
And chill'd the soul of every guest ;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast ;
The elvish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, mutter'd, " Found ! found ! found ! "

Then sudden, through the darken'd air,
A flash of lightning came ;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seem'd on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall ;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone ;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,
And fill'd the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish page it broke.
It broke, with thunder long and loud,
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung ;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more !

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all ;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, " GYLBIN, COME ! "
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him down,

Levin-brand, Lightning flash.

Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence pray'd and shook,
And terror dimm'd each lofty look.
But none of all the astonish'd train
Was so dismay'd as Deloraine ;
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
'Twas fear'd his mind would ne'er return ;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
At length, by fits, he darkly told,
With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
That he had seen, right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapp'd around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea ;
And knew—but how it matter'd not—
It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

Hush'd is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone ?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage ?
No ; close beneath proud Newark's tower
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower ;
A simple hut ; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days ;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begg'd before.
So pass'd the winter's day ; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,

Spectre-hound, At Peel Castle in the Isle of Man.

And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke !
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day ;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer ;
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

QUESTIONS ON THE *LAY*

1. Contexts : *ad lib.* Paraphrase : *ad lib.*

2. Which passage in Canto I. do you like best ? In Canto II., etc.

3. Which character do you admire most ? Which least ? Contrast them.

4. What do you learn from the *Lay* about the position of minstrels (*a*) in feudal times, (*b*) in the reign of William and Mary ?

5. Who was the Ladye of Branksome ? Describe what you suppose she would be like. Explain, too, why she wished to have the Magic Book.

6. Memorize the description of the night-ride of William of Deloraine, and then compose a similar description of your own of a motor-cycle journey by night to Stonehenge.

7. Describe in your own words, in the vividest prose you can, the ride of Deloraine, and the events that took place in the abbey of Melrose.

8. Compose a story of magic under modern conditions, basing your ideas on the Magic Book of Michael Scott.

9. How do feuds arise ? Why are they rare nowadays ? Outline the story of the feud between Scotts and Carrs.

10. Put into your own words, as if you were delivering a speech, the chief points in the Minstrel's praise of patriotism.

11. How would the heir of Branksome recognize the nationality of his captors ?

12. Give an account of the Monk of St. Mary's

aisle, Michael Scott and Melrose Abbey, Watt Tinlinn.

13. What charges were brought by the English against William of Deloraine? Considering the age in which he lived, would you consider them disgraceful if true?

14. Describe in prose or verse the combat in the lists, as if you were a Scott present on the occasion.

15. Illustrate the mischievousness of the Goblin Page, and its consequences.

16. Imagine yourself to be the Goblin Page. Describe your adventures as if you were writing a diary, up to Harold's song. Then attach a footnote as by Lord Cranstoun, describing your final disappearance.

17. Digest the story of "Rosabelle," and retell it as in a modern short story.

18. Indicate the part played in the story by William of Deloraine. Show that he possessed the qualities of a "sportsman."

19. Give a graphic account of your day as the Lord of a Border castle in the Tudor period.

20. Compose about forty rhyming couplets bringing in the names and some of the actions of the chief characters in the poem.

21. Find examples of (*a*) rapid lines, (*b*) slow lines. How are they made to sound rapid or slow?

22. Which passage would you offer as a good example of (*a*) energetic action, (*b*) beauty of language-sound, (*c*) excellence of description, (*d*) dramatic effect, (*e*) pathos, and (*f*) sound expressing sense?

23. Why does Scott use so many (*a*) proper names, (*b*) old-fashioned expressions? Give ten examples of the most memorable of each.

24. Compose twenty rhyming couplets to describe a Polar Expedition or a General Election.

25. Scott writes, "His coal-black hair, *shorn* round and close," not "*cut* round and close." Give ten other examples of the use of the "right word," and

give the less accurate or effective word he might have used instead.

26. Illustrate by several quotations Scott's fondness for introducing colour into his descriptions ; and for using black and white in contrast.

27. Quote passages to show that Scott noticed the minute details of (*a*) dress, (*b*) buildings, (*c*) Nature.

28. It is a favourite device of story-tellers to pair off opposite types of character—*e.g.* the hero and the villain, a king and a beggar-maid. Give examples from this poem, and fully describe one of the pairs.

29. Write down the names of the chief characters in the story in the order, in your opinion, of their "aliveness." Describe the two most living characters; and say what causes the character least alive to be so unconvincing.

30. Re-write the story as if Lord Dacre had had his own way, and the English had stormed Branksome.

31. Arrange the story as for a film, and compose sub-titles.

32. At what point does the story really end ? What reasons has Scott for continuing further ?

33. Suppose a man like Scott went round to-day by motor-car on the same quest for folk-lore and ballads, would he get similar results to Scott ? Give full details.

34. Read over carefully the passage in Canto III. from "Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode" down to "And laugh'd, and shouted, 'Lost! lost! lost!'" Re-write it, making it amusing by absurd exaggeration : that is, compose a parody on it.

35. Imagine an interview with the ghost of Sir Walter Scott, in which he faintly remembers having written the *Lay*, and presses you for details of it to sharpen his memory. Compose a dialogue for this.

36. Describe the life of Sir Walter Scott up to the time of writing the *Lay*, imagining you are the poet composing his autobiography.

MARMION

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD

" Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
The gibbet or the field prepared to grace;
A mighty mixture of the great and base."—BYRON.

INTRODUCTION

I.—The Author

When Scott's daughter was asked if she had read *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, her candid reply was, "No, papa says there is nothing so bad for young people as reading bad poetry." The reading public took a different view of the *Lay*, and Scott determined upon a second romance of the kind.

The year following the appearance of the *Lay* saw him Clerk of the Court of Session, with leisure to prepare his material for a plot dealing with the greatest catastrophe in Scottish history, the Battle of Flodden (1513). Battle-description was exactly to his mind now that the Edinburgh Volunteer Horse were in quarters again. "In the intervals of drilling, Scott used to delight himself in walking his powerful black steed up and down by himself upon the Portobello sands, within the beating of the surge; and now and then you would see him plunge in his spurs, and go off as if at the charge, with the spray dashing about him. As we rode back to Musselburgh, he often came (wrote Skene, Cornet of the Horse) and placed himself beside me, to repeat the verses that he had been composing during these pauses of our exercise."

Over the new poem, *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field*, he took greater pains than over his others. He invented an intriguing story, fitted this into history, and composed stirring descriptions that are as alive to-day as when he wrote them. Begun in the

autumn of 1807, *Marmion* came out early in 1808, and surpassed even the *Lay* in popularity.

II.—Data for starting on the Poem

At the opening of the poem it must be understood that trouble was brewing between Scotland and England, though Henry VIII.'s sister was wife to the King of Scotland, James IV. It was France that urged James to war. He was a knightly king, uplifted by the command of a fine army; and he thought of war as a pure adventure. The Queen and the powerful Earl of Angus, however, headed a strong opposition party. While a decision thus hung in the balance, Henry VIII. (so Scott pretends) dispatched to the Court of Holyrood an ambassador, Lord Marmion, to press for a peaceful settlement. Marmion rode north on his errand, and the story opens with his arrival on the Border at the English castle of Norham. On his way thither, he had delivered over to the Church, at Lindisfarne on the Northumbrian coast, his " page " Constant, trusting she would be mercifully treated in spite of having as a novice run away from her convent.

Time: From the commencement of August 1513 to the close of the Battle of Flodden, 9th September following—about a month.

Place: Norham Castle, on the Tweed; the hilly route to Edinburgh, via Crichtoun Castle (on the Scottish Tyne, seven miles before the capital); the route to Tantallon Castle (near North Berwick), thence to Lennel (on the Tweed); and Flodden Field.

To understand the story a map is essential.

MARMION

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD

CANTO FIRST

THE CASTLE

Day set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone :
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates, where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seem'd forms of giant height :
Their armour, as it caught the rays,
Flash'd back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

Saint George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung ;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the Donjon Tower,
So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted on their search,
The Castle gates were barr'd ;

Donjon keep, Tower containing chief rooms, where the Lord of the Castle lived.

Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The Warder kept his guard ;
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient Border gathering song.

A distant trampling sound he hears ;
He looks abroad, and soon appears,
O'er Horncliff-hill a plump of spears,
Beneath a pennon gay ;
A horseman, darting from the crowd,
Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
Before the dark array.
Beneath the sable palisade,
That closed the Castle barricade,
His bugle horn he blew ;
The Warder hasted from the wall,
And warn'd the Captain in the hall,
For well the blast he knew ;
And joyfully that knight did call,
To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

" Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
Bring pasties of the doe,
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,
And all our trumpets blow ;
And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot ;
Lord MARMION waits below ! "
Then to the Castle's lower ward
Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,

Plump, Cluster.
Malvoisie, Malmsey, a Greek wine. *Glee*, Song.

Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparr'd,
And let the drawbridge fall.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger trode,
His helm hung at the saddle-bow ;
Well by his visage you might know
He was a stalworth knight, and keen,
And had in many a battle been ;
The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd
A token true of Bosworth field ;
His eyebrow dark, and eye on fire,
Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire ;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick mustache, and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age ;
His square-turn'd joints, and strength of limb,
Show'd him no carpet knight so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage.

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
In mail and plate of Milan steel,
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd ;
Amid the plumage of the crest,
A falcon hover'd on her nest,
With wings outspread, and forward breast ;
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soar'd sable in an azure field :

Casque, Helmet.
Carpet knight, A knight of the drawing-room rather than of the battlefield.

The golden legend bore aright,
WHO CHECKS AT ME, TO DEATH IS DIGHT.
Blue was the charger's broider'd rein ;
Blue ribbons deck'd his arching mane ;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name, and knightly sires ;
They burn'd the gilded spurs to claim ;
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring away ;
Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love-ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
With halbert, bill, and battle-axe :
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sumpter-mules along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.
The last and trustiest of the four,
On high his forky pennon bore ;
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazon'd sable, as before,
The towering falcon seem'd to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
With falcons broider'd on each breast,

Checks, Interferes with.
Dight to death, Made ready for death, or (as good as) done to death.
Housing, Horse's cloth, reaching to the ground.
Trapp'd, Ornamented. *Sumpter*, Pack.

Attended on their lord's behest.
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood ;
Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft could send ;
Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
And at their belts their quivers rung.
Their dusty palfreys, and array,
Show'd they had march'd a weary way.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly arm'd, and order'd how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the Castle-yard ;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared :
Enter'd the train, and such a clang,
As then through all his turrets rang,
Old Norham never heard.

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
The trumpets flourished brave,
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
And thundering welcome gave.
A blithe salute, in martial sort,
The minstrels well might sound,
For, as Lord Marmion cross'd the court,
He scatter'd angels round.
" Welcome to Norham, Marmion !
Stout heart, and open hand !

Morion, A steel helmet leaving the face exposed.
Linstock, The stick to which was attached a lighted match for firing the shot. *Yare*, ready.
Morrice-pikes, Moorish pikes.
Angels, A coin worth about a pound sterling. The image on it showed the Archangel Michael killing a dragon.

Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
Thou flower of English land ! "

Two pursuivants, whom tabarts deck,
With silver scutcheon round their neck,
Stood on the steps of stone,
By which you reach the donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and state,
They hail'd Lord Marmion :
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town ;
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain of twelve marks' weight,
All as he lighted down.
" Now, largesse, largesse, Lord Marmion,
Knight of the crest of gold !
A blazon'd shield, in battle won,
Ne'er guarded heart so bold."

They marshall'd him to the Castle-hall,
Where the guests stood all aside,
And loudly flourish'd the trumpet-call,
And heralds loudly cried,—
" Room, lordings, room for Lord Marmion,
With the crest and helm of gold !
Full well we know the trophies won
In the lists at Cottiswold :
There, vainly, Ralph de Wilton strove
'Gainst Marmion's force to stand ;
To him he lost his lady-love,
And to the King his land.
Ourselves beheld the listed field,
A sight both sad and fair ;

Brook, Manage. *Tabart*, Herald's square, sleeveless coat.
Scutcheon, Small silver shield, painted with a coat of arms.
Twelve marks' weight, Six pounds. *Largesse*, A gift.

We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
And saw his saddle bare ;
We saw the victor win the crest
He wears with worthy pride ;
And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
His foeman's scutcheon tied.
Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight !
Room, room, ye gentles gay,
For him who conquer'd in the right,
Marmion of Fontenaye ! "

Then stepp'd to meet that noble Lord,
Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
And Captain of the Hold,
He led Lord Marmion to the deas,
Raised o'er the pavement high,
And placed him in the upper place—
They feasted full and high :
The whiles a Northern harper rude
Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,
" How the fierce Thirwalls, and Ridleys all,
Stout Willimondswick,
And Hardriding Dick,
And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,
Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw."
Scantily Lord Marmion's ear could brook
The harper's barbarous lay ;
Yet much he praised the pains he took,
And well those pains did pay :
For lady's suit, and minstrel's strain,
By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

Deas, Dais—raised platform at the end of a hall.
Hardriding, Richard Ridley of Hardriding, in Northumberland. There was a feud between the Ridleys and the Featherstons.
Shaw, A wood.

" Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says,
" Of your fair courtesy,
I pray you bide some little space
In this poor tower with me.
Here may you keep your arms from rust,
May breathe your war-horse well ;
Seldom hath pass'd a week but giust
Or feat of arms befell :
The Scots can rein a mettled steed ;
And love to couch a spear ;—
Saint George ! a stirring life they lead,
That have such neighbours near.
Then stay with us a little space,
Our northern wars to learn ;
I pray you, for your lady's grace ! "
Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

He declines the invitation, and requests the favour of a guide to conduct him on the road to Edinburgh. He may not dally, as he is on a special mission to King James at Holyrood. Various suggestions are made, but the most likely guide, the merry Friar John, has deadly enemies en route.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved to his uncle and that lord,
And reverently took up the word.
" Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to brother John.
He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach.
Let Friar John, in safety, still
In chimney-corner snore his fill,
Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill :
Last night, to Norham there came one,
Will better guide Lord Marmion."—

Giust, Joust, a tilting match. *Crabs*, Crab apples.

" Nephew," quoth Heron, " by my fay,
Well hast thou spoke ; say forth thy say."—

" Here is a holy Palmer come,
From Salem first, and last from Rome ;
One that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
And visited each holy shrine
In Araby and Palestine.

" To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
For his sins' pardon hath he pray'd.
He knows the passes of the North,
And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth ;
Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or lake.
This were a guide o'er moor and dale ;
But, when our John hath quaff'd his ale,
As little as the wind that blows
And warms itself against his nose,
Kens he, or cares, which way he goes."—

" Gramercy ! " quoth Lord Marmion,
" Full loth were I, that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me,
Were placed in fear or jeopardy.
If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
Instead of cockle-shell, or bead,
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy ramblers ; still
They know to charm a weary hill,

Gramercy, " Grand merci," much thanks.
Palmer, A sort of perpetual pilgrim. He visited one holy shrine after another, living on charity.
Saint, Saint James of Compostella. Badge : a cockle-shell.

With song, romance, or lay :
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend at the least,
They bring to cheer the way."—

" Ah ! noble sir," young Selby said,
And finger on his lip he laid,
" This man knows much, perchance e'en more
Than he could learn by holy lore.
Still to himself he's muttering,
And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
Last night we listen'd at his cell ;
Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,
He murmur'd on till morn, howe'er
No living mortal could be near.
Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
As other voices spoke again.
I cannot tell—I like it not—
Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
No conscience clear, and void of wrong,
Can rest awake, and pray so long.
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have mark'd ten aves, and two creeds."—

" Let pass," quoth Marmion ; " by my fay,
This man shall guide me on my way,
Although the great arch-fiend and he
Had sworn themselves of company.
So please you, gentle youth, to call
This Palmer to the Castle-hall."
The summon'd Palmer came in place ;
His sable cowl o'erhung his face ;
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought ;

Beads, To count the prayers.
Aves, Short prayers to the Virgin. *Creeds*, Confessions of faith.

The scallop shell his cap did deck ;
The crucifix around his neck
Was from Loretto brought ;
His sandals were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore ;
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Show'd pilgrim from the Holy Land.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,
Or look'd more high and keen ;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
As he his peer had been.
But his gaunt frame was worn with toil ;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while !
And when he struggled at a smile,
His eye look'd haggard wild :
Poor wretch ! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know—
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask ;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
" But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St. Andrews bound,

Budget, Leather bag. *Scrip*, Wallet.

Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound ;
Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore :
Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more ! "

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee.
Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The Captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drain'd it merrily ;
Alone the Palmer pass'd it by,
Though Selby press'd him courteously.
This was a sign the feast was o'er ;
It hush'd the merry wassel roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the castle nought was heard,
But the slow footstep of the guard,
Pacing his sober round.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose :
And first the chapel doors unclose ;
Then, after morning rites were done
(A hasty mass from Friar John),
And knight and squire had broke their fast,
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse :

Draught of sleep, Last draught before resting, to induce sleep.
Wassel, Revelry.

Then came the stirrup-cup in course :
Between the Baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost ;
High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd
That noble train, their Lord the last.
Then loudly rung the trumpet call ;
Thunder'd the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore ;
Around the castle eddied slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar ;
Till they roll'd forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

CANTO SECOND

THE CONVENT

The breeze, which swept away the smoke
Round Norham Castle roll'd,
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning-flash, and thunder-stroke,
As Marmion left the Hold,—
It curl'd not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew, and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloister'd pile,
Bound to St. Cuthbert's Holy Isle,
It bore a bark along.
Upon the gale she stoop'd her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,

Stirrup-cup, A parting cup handed to the guest when mounted to depart.

As she were dancing home ;
The merry seamen laugh'd, to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joy'd they in their honour'd freight ;
For, on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform'd on Benedictine school ;
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare ;
Vigils, and penitence austere,
Had early quench'd the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame, in sooth ;
Though vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey,
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame ;
Summoned to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
A chapter of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict,
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

The two prisoners, Sister Constance and a "caitiff monk," had plotted the death of Sister Clare.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair ;
As yet a novice unprofess'd,
Lovely and gentle, but distress'd.
She was betroth'd to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonour'd fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one who loved her for her land :
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom,
Her blasted hopes and wither'd bloom.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland ;
Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown ;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain :
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle ;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way ;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view

The Castle with its battled walls,
The ancient Monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close ;
Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drown'd amid the breakers' roar,
According chorus rose :
Down to the haven of the isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim ;
Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare ;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rush'd emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land ;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And bless'd them with her hand.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made :
All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,
The stranger sisters roam :
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having stray'd and gazed their fill,

They closed around the fire ;
And all, in turn, essay'd to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid ; for, be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own.

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe,
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.
It was more dark and lone that vault
Than the worst dungeon cell :
Old Colwulf built it, for his fault,
In penitence to dwell,
When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,
Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
A place of burial for such dead,
As, having died in mortal sin,
Might not be laid the church within.
'Twas now a place of punishment ;
Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
As reach'd the upper air,
The hearers bless'd themselves, and said,
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoan'd their torments there.

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle
Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew
Where the place lay, and still more few
Were those, who had from him the clew

To that dread vault to go.
Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported there.
In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls sprung ;
The gravestones, rudely sculptured o'er,
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor ;
The mildew-drops fell one by one,
With tinkling plash, upon the stone.
A cresset, in an iron chain,
Which served to light this drear domain,
With damp and darkness seem'd to strive,
As if it scarce might keep alive ;
And yet it dimly served to show
The awful conclave met below.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents three :
All servants of Saint Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay ;
In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown
By the pale cresset's ray :
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's, there,
Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,
She closely drew her veil ;
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,
And she with awe looks pale :
And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
Has long been quench'd by age's night,

Cresset, An oil lamp with a rope wick.

Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace, is shown,
Whose look is hard and stern,—
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style ;
For sanctity call'd, through the isle,
The Saint of Lindisfarne.

Before them stood a guilty pair ;
But, though an equal fate they share,
Yet one alone deserves our care.
Her sex a page's dress belied ;
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
Her cap down o'er her face she drew ;
And, on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest.
But, at the Prioress' command,
A Monk undid the silken band,
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread,
In ringlets rich and rare.
Constance de Beverley they know,
Sister profess'd of Fontevraud,
Whom the Church number'd with the dead,
For broken vows, and convent fled.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed ;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed ;
One whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires.
Such tools the Tempter ever needs

Fontevraud, Convent in Anjou.

To do the savagest of deeds ;
For them no vision'd terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt,
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death,—alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash ;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak !
For there were seen in that dark wall,
Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall ;—
Who enters at such grisly door,
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
In each a slender meal was laid,
Of roots, of water, and of bread :
By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless ;
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Show'd the grim entrance of the porch :
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were display'd,
And building tools in order laid.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom,
On those the wall was to enclose,
Alive, within the tomb ;
But stopp'd, because that woeful Maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essay'd.
Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain ;
Her accents might no utterance gain ;
Nought but imperfect murmurs slip

From her convulsed and quivering lip ;
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seem'd to hear a distant rill—
'Twas ocean's swells and falls ;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,
A hectic and a flutter'd streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak
By Autumn's stormy sky ;
And when her silence broke at length,
Still as she spoke she gather'd strength,
And arm'd herself to bear.
It was a fearful sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy,
In form so soft and fair.

" I speak not to implore your grace,
Well know I, for one minute's space
Successless might I sue :
Nor do I speak your prayers to gain ;
For if a death of lingering pain,
To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
Vain are your masses too.—
I listen'd to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil :
For three long years I bow'd my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride ;
And well my folly's meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.—
He saw young Clara's face more fair,

He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
And Constance was beloved no more.—
'Tis an old tale, and often told ;
But, did my fate and wish agree,
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like me !

" The King approved his favourite's aim ;
In vain a rival barr'd his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
For he attaints that rival's fame
With treason's charge—and on they came,
In mortal lists to fight.
Their oaths are said,
Their prayers are pray'd,
Their lances in the rest are laid,
They meet in mortal shock ;
And, hark ! the throng, with thundering cry,
Shout ' Marmion, Marmion ! to the sky,
De Wilton to the block ! '
Say ye, who preach Heaven shall decide
When in the lists two champions ride,
Say, was Heaven's justice here,
When, loyal in his love and faith,
Wilton found overthrow or death,
Beneath a traitor's spear ?
How false the charge, how true he fell,
This guilty packet best can tell."—
Then drew a packet from her breast,
Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke the rest.

" Still was false Marmion's bridal staid ;
To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
The hated match to shun.
' Ho ! shifts she thus ? ' King Henry cried,
' Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,

If she were sworn a nun.'
One way remain'd—the King's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land :
I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd
For Clara and for me :
This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And, by his drugs, my rival fair
A saint in heaven should be.
But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice has undone us both.

" And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.
Had fortune my last hope betray'd,
This packet, to the King convey'd,
Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
Although my heart that instant broke.—
Now, men of death, work forth your will,
For I can suffer, and be still ;
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but Death who comes at last."

Fix'd was her look, and stern her air :
Back from her shoulders stream'd her hair ;
The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
Stared up erectly from her head.
The judges felt the victim's dread :
No hand was moved, no word was said,
Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
Raising his sightless balls to heaven :—
" Sister, let thy sorrows cease ;
Sinful brother, part in peace ! "
From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
Of execution too, and tomb,
Paced forth the judges three ;

Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
The butcher-work that there befell,
When they had glided from the cell
Of sin and misery.

An hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day ;
But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan :
With speed their upward way they take
(Such speed as age and fear can make),
And cross'd themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying, tottering on :
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
They seem'd to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.
Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in answer rung ;
So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
Listed before, aside, behind,
Then couch'd him down beside the hind,
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

CANTO THIRD

THE HOSTEL, OR INN

The livelong day Lord Marmion rode :
The mountain path the Palmer show'd,
By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland road,

For the Merse forayers were abroad.
The noon had long been pass'd before
They gain'd the height of Lammermoor ;
Thence winding down the northern way,
Before them, at the close of day,
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone ;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein :
The village inn seem'd large, though rude ;
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train.
Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
With jingling spurs the courtyard rung ;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamour fills the hall :
Weighing the labour with the cost,
Toils everywhere the bustling host.

Soon, by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel might you gaze.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle Marmion sate,
And view'd, around the blazing hearth,
His followers mix in noisy mirth ;

Merse, Or March, the southern district of Berwickshire.
Bush, Of ivy, which, as sacred to the god of wine, betokened an inn.

Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest :
And oft Lord Marmion deign'd to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made ;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May ;
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy ;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower :—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood ;
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell ;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.

To cheer the company, depressed by the Palmer's stern looks, Fitz-Eustace sings a song, a favourite one of the absent page Constant. It tells of the shameful end of lovers who prove faithless.

Soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said,—

" Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seem'd in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul ?
Say, what may this portend ? "—
Then first the Palmer silence broke
(The livelong day he had not spoke),
" The death of a dear friend."

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne'er changed in worst extremity ;
Marmion, whose soul could scantly brook,
Even from his King, a haughty look ;
Whose accent of command controll'd,
In camps, the boldest of the bold—
Thought, look, and utterance fail'd him now,
Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his brow ;
For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer's look,
So full upon his conscience strook,
That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps, that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave ;
A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes veil their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

Well might he falter !—By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betray'd.
Not that he augur'd of the doom,
Which on the living closed the tomb :
But, tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid ;
And wroth, because in wild despair,
She practised on the life of Clare ;
Its fugitive the Church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave ;

And deem'd restraint in convent strange
Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge.
Himself, proud Henry's favourite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear,
Secure his pardon he might hold,
For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way,
When the stern priests surprised their prey.
His train but deem'd the favourite page
Was left behind, to spare his age ;
Or other if they deem'd, none dared
To mutter what he thought and heard :
Woe to the vassal, who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy !

His conscience slept—he deem'd her well,
And safe secured in distant cell ;
But, waken'd by her favourite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding say,
That fell so ominous and drear,
Full on the object of his fear,
To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose.
And twice he rose to cry, " To horse ! "—
And twice his Sovereign's mandate came,
Like damp upon a kindling flame ;
And twice he thought, " Gave I not charge
She should be safe, though not at large ?
They durst not, for their island, shred
One golden ringlet from her head."

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
Repentance and reviving love,
Their Host the Palmer's speech had heard,
And, talkative, took up the word :
" Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray

Mulct, Fine.

From Scotland's simple land away,
To visit realms afar,
Full often learn the art to know
Of future weal, or future woe,
By word, or sign, or star ;
Yet might a knight his fortune hear,
If, knight-like, he despises fear,
Not far from hence ;—if fathers old
Aright our hamlet legend told."—
These broken words the menials move
(For marvels still the vulgar love),
And, Marmion giving licence cold,
His tale the Host thus gladly told.

On yonder hill stands an ancient Pictish rampart forming a circular enclosure. Centuries ago, our King Alexander III. came here to visit Sir Hugo de Gifford, a magician, and inquired the outcome of his war with the Danish King Haco, then harrying the Firth of Clyde. At Sir Hugo's direction, the King issued forth at midnight armed and on horseback, and entered the enclosure, where he fought with an Elfin Warrior in the guise of the King's greatest enemy (Edward I. of England). Alexander unhorsed the other, and learnt from him that Haco should be defeated in a battle at Largs. And this duly came to pass.

Since that time many a knight had tried the adventure ; few had returned to tell the tale. The chance still lay open to those who would take the risk : to overcome the Elfin Warrior meant learning the secrets of one's future ; to be overcome meant death.

The quaighs were deep, the liquor strong,
And on the tale the yeoman-throng
Had made a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign :

Quaighs, Wooden cups, made by hooping staves together.

And, with their lord, the squires retire ;
The rest, around the hostel fire,
Their drowsy limbs recline ;
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe were laid.
Deep-slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppress'd with toil and ale, they snore :
The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows strange.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay ;
Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
The foldings of his mantle green :
Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
Of sport by thicket, or by stream,
Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him, when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
Stood a tall form, with nodding plume ;
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he knew.

—" Fitz-Eustace ! rise, I cannot rest ;
Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my mood :
The air must cool my feverish blood ;
And fain would I ride forth, to see
The scene of elfin chivalry.
Arise, and saddle me my steed ;
And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves ;
I would not that the prating knaves
Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,

Targe, A round shield.

That I could credit such a tale."—
Then softly down the steps they slid,
Eustace the stable door undid,
And, darkling, Marmion's steed array'd,
While, whispering, thus the Baron said :—

" Did'st never, good my youth, hear tell,
That on the hour when I was born,
Saint George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn ?
The flattering chaplains all agree
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe !
Blithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite :—
Vain thought ! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring."
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

Fitz-Eustace followed him abroad,
And mark'd him pace the village road,
And listen'd to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seem'd, in the squire's eyes,
That one, so wary held, and wise,—
Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
For gospel, what the Church believed,—
Should, stirr'd by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Array'd in plate and mail.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But, patient, waited till he heard,
At distance, prick'd to utmost speed,
The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
Come town-ward rushing on ;
First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
Then, clattering on the village road,—
In other pace than forth he yode,
Return'd Lord Marmion.
Down hastily he sprung from selle,
And, in his haste, wellnigh he fell ;
To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
And spoke no word as he withdrew :
But yet the moonlight did betray,
The falcon-crest was soil'd with clay ;
And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
By stains upon the charger's knee,
And his left side, that on the moor
He had not kept his footing sure.
Long musing on these wondrous signs,
At length to rest the squire reclines,
Broken and short ; for still, between,
Would dreams of terror intervene :
Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.

CANTO FOURTH

THE CAMP

Eustace, I said, did blithely mark
The first notes of the merry lark.
The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,

Yode, Went. *Selle*, Saddle.

And with their light and lively call
Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
Whistling they came, and free of heart,
But soon their mood was changed ;
Complaint was heard on every part,
Of something disarranged.
Some clamour'd loud for armour lost ;
Some brawl'd and wrangled with the host ;
" By Becket's bones," cried one, " I fear,
That some false Scot has stolen my spear ! "—
Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
Found his steed wet with sweat and mire ;
Although the rated horse-boy sware
Last night he dress'd him sleek and fair.
While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder,—
" Help, gentle Blount ! help, comrades all !
Bevis lies dying in his stall !
To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
Of the good steed he loves so well ? "
Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
The charger panting on his straw ;
Till one, who would seem wisest, cried,—
" What else but evil could betide,
With that cursed Palmer for our guide ?
Better we had through mire and bush
Been lantern-led by Friar Rush."

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guess'd,
Nor wholly understood,
His comrades' clamorous plaints suppress'd ;
He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,

Lantern-led, Led by the will-o'-the-wisp, a hovering light seen near marshes.
Friar Rush, Generally a spirit haunting houses and leading monks into trouble. Here confused with will-o'-the-wisp.

And did his tale display
Simply, as if he knew of nought
To cause such disarray.
Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
Nor marvell'd at the wonders told,—
Pass'd them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions sound to horse.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
Had reckon'd with their Scottish host ;
And, as the charge he cast and paid,
" Ill thou deserv'st thy hire," he said ;
" Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight ?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam !
I trust that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross, and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land,
To their infernal home :
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trample to and fro."—
The laughing host look'd on the hire,—
" Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou comest among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo."
Here stay'd their talk,—for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journey'd all the morning day.

They were met on their way by Sir David Lindesay of the Mount, Lord Lion King-at-arms, who, as chief of the College of Heralds, had come to announce King James's

Conjuring, Driving out by sacred incantations.

commands. Marmion, he said, was to stay at Crichtoun Castle until the King could grant audience; and all his party should remain under guard. The party then continued their journey.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
Where Crichtoun Castle crowns the bank;
For there the Lion's care assigned
A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
With every rite that honour claims,
Attended as the King's own guest:—
Such the command of Royal James,
Who marshall'd then his land's array
Upon the Borough-moor that lay.
Perchance he would not foeman's eye
Upon his gathering host should pry,
Till full prepared was every band
To march against the English land.
Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit;
And, in his turn, he knew to prize
Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and wise,—
Train'd in the lore of Rome and Greece,
And policies of war and peace.

It chanced, as fell the second night,
That on the battlements they walk'd,
And, by the slowly fading light,
Of varying topics talked;
And, unaware, the Herald-bard
Said, Marmion might his toil have spared,
In travelling so far;
For that a messenger from heaven

Borough-moor, Edinburgh's Common.

In vain to James had counsel given
Against the English war.

Marmion did not doubt this might be true ; for he too had had experience of the supernatural at Gifford, and now told his host the manner of it.

" In vain," said he, " to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couch'd my head :
Fantastic thoughts return'd ;
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burn'd.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed, and forth I rode,
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reach'd the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I pass'd through,
And halted, and my bugle blew.
Methought an answer met my ear,—
Yet was the blast so low and drear,
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own.

" Thus judging, for a little space
I listened, ere I left the place ;
But scarce could trust my eyes,
Nor yet can think they served me true,
When sudden in the ring I view,
In form distinct of shape and hue,
A mounted champion rise.—
I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
In single fight and mix'd affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight ;
But when this unexpected foe
Seem'd starting from the gulf below,—
I care not though the truth I show,—
I trembled with affright ;

And as I placed in rest my spear,
My hand so shook for very fear,
I scarce could couch it right.

" Why need my tongue the issue tell ?
We ran our course,—my charger fell ;—
What could he 'gainst the shock of hell ?—
I roll'd upon the plain.
High o'er my head, with threatening hand,
The spectre shook his naked brand,—
Yet did the worst remain :
My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
Not opening hell itself could blast
Their sight, like what I saw !
Full on his face the moonbeam strook,—
A face could never be mistook !
I knew the stern vindictive look,
And held my breath for awe.
I saw the face of one who, fled
To foreign climes, has long been dead,—
I well believe the last ;
For ne'er, from vizor raised, did stare
A human warrior, with a glare
So grimly and so ghast.
Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade ;
But when to good Saint George I pray'd
(The first time ere I ask'd his aid),
He plunged it in the sheath ;
And, on his courser mounting light,
He seem'd to vanish from my sight :
The moonbeam droop'd, and deepest night
Sunk down upon the heath.—
'Twere long to tell what cause I have
To know his face, that met me there,
Call'd by his hatred from the grave,
To cumber upper air ;
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy."

Marvell'd Sir David of the Mount ;
But nought, at length, in answer said ;
And here their farther converse staid,
  Each ordering that his band
Should bowne them with the rising day,
To Scotland's camp to take their way,—
  Such was the King's command.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
And I could trace each step they trode.
Suffice it that the route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They pass'd the glen and scanty rill,
And climb'd the opposing bank, until
They gain'd the top of Blackford Hill.

Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor below,
  Upland, and dale, and down :—
A thousand did I say ? I ween,
Thousands on thousands there were seen,
That chequer'd all the heath between
  The streamlet and the town ;
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular ;
Oft giving way, where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with green :
In these extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.
Nor mark'd they less, where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair ;
  Various in shape, device, and hue,
  Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tail'd, and square,

Dun-Edin, Edinburgh.

Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, there
O'er the pavilions flew.

Lord Marmion view'd the landscape bright,—
He view'd it with a chief's delight,—
Until within him burn'd his heart,
And lightning from his eye did part,
As on the battle-day ;
Such glance did falcon never dart,
When stooping on his prey.
" Oh ! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
Thy King from warfare to dissuade
Were but a vain essay :
For, by St. George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal nor divine,
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimm'd their armour's shine
In glorious battle-fray ! "
Answer'd the Bard, of milder mood :
" Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere good,
That kings would think withal,
When peace and wealth their land has bless'd,
'Tis better to sit still at rest,
Than rise, perchance to fall."
And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp they gain,
And there they made a stay.

Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, Feudal ensigns indicating rank. *Scroll,* Flag bearing a motto. *Pennon,* Flag with double point. *Pensil,* A small pennon. *Bandrol,* Flag to fix under the crook of a crosier ; intimating a church dignitary.

CANTO FIFTH

THE COURT

Thus through the Scottish camp they pass'd,
And reach'd the City gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Arm'd burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamp'd, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show :
At every turn, with dinning clang,
The armourer's anvil clash'd and rang ;
Or toil'd the swarthy smith, to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel ;
Or axe, or falchion, to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
Through street, and lane, and market-place,
  Bore lance, or casque, or sword ;
While burghers, with important face,
  Described each new-come lord,
Discuss'd his lineage, told his name,
His following, and his warlike fame.
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlooked the crowded street ;
  There must the Baron rest,
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
  Such was the King's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich, and costly wines,
  To Marmion and his train ;

To wheel, To bend the iron bar into a horse-shoe.

And when the appointed hour succeeds,
The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads
The palace-halls they gain.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
That night, with wassell, mirth, and glee :
King James within her princely bower,
Feasted the Chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summon'd to spend the parting hour ;
For he had charged, that his array
Should southward march by break of day.
Well loved that splendid monarch aye
The banquet and the song,
By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light,
The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past,
It was his blithest—and his last.
The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
Cast on the Court a dancing ray ;
Here to the harp did minstrels sing ;
There ladies touch'd a softer string ;
With long-ear'd cap, and motley vest,
The licensed fool retail'd his jest ;
His magic tricks the juggler plied ;
At dice and draughts the gallants vied ;
While some, in close recess apart,
Courted the ladies of their heart.

Through this mix'd crowd of glee and game,
The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
While, reverent, all made room.
An easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know,
Although, his courtesy to show,

He doff'd to Marmion, bending low,
  His broider'd cap and plume.
For royal were his garb and mien,
  His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
  Trimm'd with the fur of martin wild ;
His vest of changeful satin sheen,
  The dazzled eye beguiled ;
His gorgeous collar hung adown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
The thistle brave, of old renown :
His trusty blade, Toledo right,
Descended from a baldric bright ;
White were his buskins, on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel ;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was button'd with a ruby rare :
And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
  And weeps the weary day,
The war against her native soil,
Her Monarch's risk in battle broil :—
And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,
Dame Heron rises with a smile
  Upon the harp to play.
And first she pitch'd her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
And then around the silent ring ;
And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by Yea and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play !
At length, upon the harp, with glee,

Buskins, Boots.

Dame Heron, Wife of Sir Hugh Heron. She was a hostage for her husband, who had been concerned in the murder of Sir Robert Carr of Cessford. Though English, she possessed influence over the Scottish King. (Not historically true.)

Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft, yet lively, air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung :—

LOCHINVAR

Lady Heron's Song

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best ;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none ;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late :
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all :
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word),
" O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar ? "—

" I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied ;—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

Lochinvar, A Gordon, of Lochinvar Castle, Kirkcudbright.
Netherby, A Hall near Carlisle, belonging to the Grahams.

The bride kiss'd the goblet : the knight took it up,
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
" Now tread we a measure ! " said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace ;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume ;
And the bride-maidens whisper'd, " 'Twere better by far,
To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near ;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung !
" She is won ! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur ;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan ;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran :
There was racing and chasing, on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar ?

Galliard, A lively dance.
Croupe, The back of the horse, behind the saddle.
Scaur, Steep bank of a river.
Musgraves. Ellen Graham was to have married one of this family.

The Monarch o'er the siren hung
And beat the measure as she sung ;
And, pressing closer, and more near,
He whisper'd praises in her ear.
The witching dame to Marmion threw
A glance, where seem'd to reign
The pride that claims applauses due,
And of her royal conquest too,
A real or feign'd disdain :
Familiar was the look, and told,
Marmion and she were friends of old,
The King observed their meeting eyes,
With something like displeased surprise ;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad,
Which Marmion's high commission show'd :
" Our Borders sack'd by many a raid,
Our peaceful liegemen robb'd," he said :
" On day of truce our Warden slain,
Stout Barton kill'd, his vassals ta'en—
Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain ;
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne."

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
And with stern eye the pageant view'd.
Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
His bitter speech he thus pursued :
" Lord Marmion, since these letters say
That in the North you needs must stay,
While slightest hopes of peace remain,
Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,

Warden, Sir Robert Carr of Cessford, Warden of the Middle Marches.
Barton, Lord High Admiral of Scotland. Defeated by Howard, and slain, for seizing English vessels.

To say—Return to Lindisfarne,
Until my herald come again.—
Then rest you in Tantallon Hold ;
Your host shall be the Douglas bold."

James reproves the Douglas for opposing the war ; but seeing the grief his reproof causes, he straightway relents.

" Forgive me, Douglas, once again."—
And, while the King his hand did strain,
The old man's tears fell down like rain.
To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whisper'd to the King aside :
" Oh ! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed !
A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart :
But woe awaits a country, when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh ! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye ! "

Displeased was James, that stranger view'd
And tamper'd with his changing mood.
" Laugh those that can, weep those that may,"
Thus did the fiery Monarch say,
" Southward I march by break of day ;
And if within Tantallon strong,
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth, in his castle-hall."—
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt :
" Much honour'd were my humble home,
If in its halls King James should come ;
But Nottingham has archers good,

The Douglas, Archibald Bell-the-Cat, Earl of Angus.

And Yorkshire men are stern of mood :
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby Hills the paths are steep ;
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep ;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent :
Yet pause, brave Prince, while yet you may ! "—
The Monarch lightly turn'd away,
And to his nobles loud did call,—
" Lords, to the dance,—a hall, a hall ! "
Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
And led Dame Heron gallantly ;
And minstrels, at the royal order,
Rung out—" Blue Bonnets o'er the Border."

. . . . . .

Leave we these revels now, to tell
What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
Whose galley, as they sail'd again
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
Till James should of their fate decide ;
And soon, by his command,
Were gently summon'd to prepare
To journey under Marmion's care,
As escort honour'd, safe, and fair,
Again to English land.

Their lodging, so the King assign'd,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, join'd ;
And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
Who warn'd him by a scroll,

Prickers, Horsemen.
" *A hall*," The ancient cry to make room for a dance, or other show.
Blue bonnet, Head-dress of the Scots.

She had a secret to reveal,
That much concern'd the Church's weal,
And health of sinner's soul ;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,
She named a place to meet,
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
Above the stately street ;
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

At night, in secret, there they came,
The Palmer and the holy Dame.
The moon among the clouds rose high,
And all the city hum was by.
A solemn scene the Abbess chose ;
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

" O, holy Palmer ! " she began,—
" For sure he must be sainted man,
Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
Where the Redeemer's tomb is found,—
For His dear Church's sake, my tale
Attend, nor deem of light avail,
Though I must speak of worldly love,—
How vain to those who wed above !—
De Wilton and Lord Marmion woo'd
Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood
(Idle it were of Whitby's dame,
To say of that same blood I came) ;
And once, when jealous rage was high,
Lord Marmion said despiteously,
Wilton was traitor in his heart,
And had made league with Martin Swart,

City hum was by, Gone, passed away. All was silent.
Swart (or Schwartz), A German captain in command of the Burgundian troops assisting Simnel.

When he came here on Simnel's part ;
And only cowardice did restrain
His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain,—
And down he threw his glove :—the thing
Was tried, as wont, before the King ;
Where frankly did De Wilton own,
That Swart in Gueldres he had known ;
And that between them then there went
Some scroll of courteous compliment.
For this he to his castle sent ;
But when his messenger return'd,
Judge how De Wilton's fury burn'd !
For in his packet there was laid
Letters that claim'd disloyal aid,
And proved King Henry's cause betray'd.
His fame, thus blighted, in the field
He strove to clear, by spear and shield ;—
To clear his fame in vain he strove,
For wondrous are His ways above !
Perchance some form was unobserved ;
Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved ;
Else how could guiltless champion quail,
Or how the blessed ordeal fail ?

" His squire, who now De Wilton saw
As recreant doom'd to suffer law,
Repentant, own'd in vain,
That, while he had the scrolls in care,
A stranger maiden, passing fair,
Had drench'd him with a beverage rare ;
His words no faith could gain.
With Clare alone he credence won,
Who, rather than wed Marmion,
Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
To give our house her livings fair

Simnel, Stokefield. Simnel personated the Earl of Warwick, and was defeated at Stokefield, 1487.

And die a vestal vot'ress there.
Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
And I, her humble vot'ress here,
Should do a deadly sin,
Her temple spoil'd before mine eyes,
If this false Marmion such a prize
By my consent should win ;
Yet hath our boisterous monarch sworn
That Clare shall from our house be torn,
And grievous cause have I to fear,
Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

" Now, prisoner, helpless, and betray'd
To evil power, I claim thine aid,
By every step that thou hast trod
To holy shrine and grotto dim,
By every martyr's tortured limb,
By angel, saint, and seraphim,
And by the Church of God !
For mark :—When Wilton was betray'd,
And with his squire forged letters laid,
She was, alas ! that sinful maid,
By whom the deed was done,—
O ! shame and horror to be said !—
She was a perjured nun !
No clerk in all the land, like her,
Traced quaint and varying character.
But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
As privy to his honour's stain,
Illimitable power :
For this she secretly retain'd
Each proof that might the plot reveal,
Instructions with his hand and seal.

" 'Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
How to my hand these papers fell ;

Clerk, Scholar, scribe.

With me they must not stay.
Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!
Who knows what outrage he might do,
While journeying by the way?—
O, blessed Saint, if e'er again
I venturous leave thy calm domain,
To travel or by land or main,
Deep penance may I pay!—
Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
I give this packet to thy care,
For thee to stop they will not dare;
And O! with cautious speed,
To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
That he may show them to the King:
And, for thy well-earn'd meed,
Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine
A weekly mass shall still be thine,
While priests can sing and read."

. . . . . .

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move.
Where is the Palmer now? and where
The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare?—
Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair
They journey in thy charge:
Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
The Palmer still was with the band;
Angus, like Lindesay, did command,
That none should roam at large.
But in that Palmer's alter'd mien
A wondrous change might now be seen,
Freely he spoke of war,
Of marvels wrought by single hand,
When lifted for a native land;
And still look'd high, as if he plann'd
Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frocke,
Would first his mettle bold provoke,

Then soothe or quell his pride.
Old Hubert said, that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

Some half-hour's march behind, there came,
By Eustace govern'd fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
With all her nuns, and Clare.
And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town, and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause a while,
Before a venerable pile.

This was a convent, and there the Abbess of St. Hilda and her nuns were received, to await a ship for England. But Clara had to remain in the charge of Fitz-Eustace, for safe conveyance to Lord Fitz-Clare, her kinsman. Loud protest was made against this, but Fitz-Eustace's honest face and guarantee that no harm should befall Clare at length eased their minds. Clare, vowing that in extremity she would die rather than marry Marmion, continued on her way with Fitz-Eustace.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
When o'er a height they pass'd,
And, sudden, close before them show'd
His towers, Tantallon vast.
Here did they rest.—The princely care
Of Douglas, why should I declare,
Or say they met reception fair?
Or why the tidings say,
Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
By hurrying posts or fleeter fame,
With every varying day?
And, first, they heard King James had won

Law, A hill.

Etall, and Wark, and Ford ; and then,
That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.
At that sore marvell'd Marmion ;—
And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland :
But whisper'd news there came,
That, while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off the day
With Heron's wily dame.—
Such acts to chronicles I yield ;
Go seek them there, and see ;
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
And not a history.—
At length they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post,
Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain ;
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gather'd in the southern land,
And march'd into Northumberland,
And camp at Wooler ta'en.
Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
Began to chafe, and swear :—
" A sorry thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,
When such a field is near !
Needs must I see this battle-day :
Death to my fame if such a fray
Were fought, and Marmion away !
The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
Hath 'bated of his courtesy :
No longer in his halls I'll stay."
Then bade his band they should array
For march against the dawning day.

CANTO SIXTH

THE BATTLE

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
Above the booming ocean leant
The far-projecting battlement ;
The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
Upon the precipice below.
Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
Gate-works, and walls, were strongly mann'd ;
No need upon the sea-girt side ;
The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
Approach of human step denied ;
And thus these lines and ramparts rude,
Were left in deepest solitude.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
Would to these battlements repair,
And muse upon her sorrows there,
And list the sea-bird's cry ;
Or slow, like noontide ghost, would glide
Along the dark-grey bulwarks' side,
And ever on the heaving tide
Look down with weary eye.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And, sighing, thought—" The Abbess, there,
Perchance, does to her home repair.
But see !—what makes this armour here ? "—
For in her path there lay
Targe, corslet, helm ;—she viewed them near.—

Targe, corslet, helm, Shield, breastplate, helmet.

" The breastplate pierced !—Ay, much I fear,
Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear."
She raised her eyes in mournful mood,—
WILTON himself before her stood !
It might have seem'd his passing ghost,
For every youthful grace was lost ;
And joy unwonted, and surprise,
Gave their strange wildness to his eyes.—
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delay'd,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply.

DE WILTON'S HISTORY

" Forget we that disastrous day,
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragg'd,—but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled—
I found me on a pallet low,
Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
Austin,—remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair ?—
Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed,—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day,
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care,
When sense return'd to wake despair ;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.

Beadsman, One pensioned to say prayers for the soul of some given person.

At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a palmer's weeds array'd,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journey'd many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth.
Oft Austin for my reason fear'd,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes uprear'd.
My friend at length fell sick, and said,
God would remove him soon:
And, while upon his dying bed,
He begg'd of me a boon—
If e'er my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquer'd lie,
Even then my mercy should awake,
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

"Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
Full well the paths I knew.
Fame of my fate made various sound,
That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perish'd of my wound,—
None cared which tale was true:
And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his Palmer's dress;
For now that sable slough is shed,
And trimm'd my shaggy beard and head,
I scarcely know me in the glass.
A chance most wondrous did provide,
That I should be that Baron's guide—
I will not name his name!—
Vengeance to God alone belongs;
But, when I think on all my wrongs,

My blood is liquid flame !
And ne'er the time shall I forget,
When in a Scottish hostel set,
Dark looks we did exchange :
What were his thoughts I cannot tell ;
But in my bosom muster'd Hell
Its plans of dark revenge.

" A word of vulgar augury,
That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
Brought on a village tale ;
Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
And sent him armed forth by night.
I borrow'd steed and mail,
And weapons, from his sleeping band ;
And, passing from a postern door,
We met, and 'counter'd hand to hand,—
He fell on Gifford moor.
For the death-stroke my brand I drew
(O then my helmed head he knew,
The Palmer's cowl was gone),
Then had three inches of my blade
The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
My hand the thought of Austin staid ;
I left him there alone.—
O good old man ! even from the grave
Thy spirit could thy master save :
If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
Given to my hand this packet dear,
Of power to clear my injured fame,
And vindicate De Wilton's name.—

" Now here, within Tantallon Hold,
To Douglas late my tale I told,
To whom my house was known of old.
Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
This eve anew shall dub me knight.

These Angus gave—his armourer's care,
Ere morn, shall every breach repair ;
For nought, he said, was in his halls,
But ancient armour on the walls,
And aged chargers in the stalls,
And women, priests, and grey-hair'd men ;
The rest were all in Twisel glen.
And now I watch my armour here,
By law of arms, till midnight's near ;
Then, once again a belted knight,
Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

" There soon again we meet, my Clare !
This Baron means to guide thee there :
Douglas reveres his King's command,
Else would he take thee from his band.
And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
Will give De Wilton justice due.
Now meeter far for martial broil,
Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
Once more "—" O Wilton ! must we then
Risk new-found happiness again,
Trust fate of arms once more ?
And is there not an humble glen,
Where we, content and poor,
Might build a cottage in the shade,
A shepherd thou, and I to aid
Thy task on dale and moor ?—
That reddening brow !—too well I know,
Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
While falsehood stains thy name :
Go then to fight ! Clare bids thee go !
Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
And weep a warrior's shame ;
Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,

These Angus gave, Indicating the armour Clare had found. (See p. 140.)

And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
And send thee forth to fame ! ”

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
The midnight moonbeam slumbering lay,
And pour'd its silver light, and pure,
Through loophole, and through embrazure,
Upon Tantallon tower and hall ;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride,
The sober glances fall.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
And Clare the spurs bound on his heels ;
And think what next he must have felt,
At buckling of the falchion belt !
And judge how Clara changed her hue,
While fastening to her lover's side
A friend, which, though in danger tried,
He once had found untrue !
Then Douglas struck him with his blade :
“ Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
I dub thee knight.
Arise, Sir Ralph, De Winton's heir !
For King, for Church, for Lady fair,
See that thou fight.”—
And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
Said—“ Wilton ! grieve not for thy woes,
Disgrace, and trouble ;
For He, who honour best bestows,
May give thee double.”—
De Wilton sobb'd, for sob he must—
“ Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
That Douglas is my brother ! ”—
“ Nay, nay,” old Angus said, “ not so ;
To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
Thy wrongs no longer smother.
I have two sons in yonder field ;

And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
Upon them bravely—do thy worst ;
And foul fall him that blenches first ! "

Not far advanced was morning day,
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride ;
He had safe conduct for his band,
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide :
The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whisper'd in an undertone,
" Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."—
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu :—
" Though something I might plain," he said,
" Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your King's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I staid ;
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke :—
" My manors, halls, and bowers shall still
Be open, at my Sovereign's will,
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my King's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone—
The hand of Douglas is his own ;
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—

Burn'd Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
And shook his very frame for ire,
And—" This to me ! " he said,—
" An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,

Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head !
And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
He, who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate :
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near
(Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword),
I tell thee, thou'rt defied !
And if thou said'st I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied ! "—
On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age :
Fierce he broke forth,—" And dar'st thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall ?
And hop'st thou hence unscathed to go ?—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no !
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, Warder, ho !
Let the portcullis fall."—
Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his need,—
And dash'd the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung ;
The ponderous grate behind him rung :
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
Just as it trembled on the rise ;
Nor lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim :
And when Lord Marmion reach'd his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,

And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
" Horse ! horse ! " the Douglas cried, " and chase ! "
But soon he rein'd his fury's pace :
" A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.—
A letter forged ! Saint Jude to speed !
Did ever knight so foul a deed !
At first in heart it liked me ill,
When the King praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line ;
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood !
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood.
'Tis pity of him too," he cried :
" Bold can he speak, and fairly ride :
I warrant him a warrior tried."
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

The day in Marmion's journey wore ;
Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
They cross'd the heights of Stanrig-moor.
His troop more closely there he scann'd,
And miss'd the Palmer from the band.—
" Palmer or not," young Blount did say,
" He parted at the peep of day ;
Good sooth, it was in strange array."—
" In what array ? " said Marmion, quick.
" My Lord, I ill can spell the trick ;
But all night long, with clink and bang,
Close to my couch did hammers clang ;
At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,

To speed, To aid me.

And from a loophole while I peep,
Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
Wrapp'd in a gown of sables fair,
As fearful of the morning air ;
Beneath, when that was blown aside,
A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
By Archibald won in bloody work,
Against the Saracen and Turk :
Last night it hung not in the hall ;
I thought some marvel would befall.
And next I saw them saddled lead
Old Cheviot forth, the Earl's best steed ;
A matchless horse, though something old,
Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
The Earl did much the Master pray
To use him on the battle-day ;
But he preferr'd "—" Nay, Henry, cease !
Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.—
Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray,
What did Blount see at break of day ? "—

" In brief, my lord, we both descried
(For then I stood by Henry's side)
The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
Upon the Earl's own favourtie steed :
All sheathed he was in armour bright,
And much resembled that same knight
Subdued by you in Cotswold fight :
Lord Angus wish'd him speed."—
The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
A sudden light on Marmion broke ;—

Old Bell-the-Cat, The Earl of Angus. So called because at a midnight council in 1482, when it was deemed needful to remove King James III.'s favourites by force, and no one else dared, Archibald Douglas offered to do so after a hint from Lord Gray, who recounted the fable of the cat and the mice.

Sholto, A son of Angus. *Master*, Eldest son of Angus.

" Ah ! dastard fool, to reason lost ! "
He mutter'd ; " 'Twas nor fay nor ghost
I met upon the moonlight wold,
But living man of earthly mould.—
O dotage blind and gross !
Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
My path no more to cross.—
How stand we now ?—he told his tale
To Douglas ; and with some avail ;
'Twas therefore gloom'd his rugged brow.—
Will Surrey dare to entertain,
'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain ?
Small risk of that, I trow.
Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun ;
Must separate Constance from the Nun—
O, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive !
A Palmer too !—no wonder why
I felt rebuked beneath his eye :
I might have known there was but one
Whose look could quell Lord Marmion."

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
His troop, and reach'd, at eve, the Tweed,
Where Lennel's convent closed their march
(There now is left but one frail arch).
Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
Give Marmion entertainment fair,
And lodging for his train and Clare.
Next morn the Baron climb'd the tower,
To view afar the Scottish power,
Encamp'd on Flodden edge :
The white pavilions made a show,
Like remnants of the winter snow,

Separate Constance, Get her away from the chance of meeting Clare. He thinks Constance still alive. *Edge*, Ridge.

Along the dusky ridge.
Long Marmion look'd :—at length his eye
Unusual movement might descry
Amid the shifting lines :
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears,
The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front now deepening, now extending ;
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
Now drawing back, and now descending,
The skilful Marmion well could know
They watched the motions of some foe
Who traversed on the plain below.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden ! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile ?
What checks the fiery soul of James ?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead ?
What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand ?—
O for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry—" Saint Andrew and our right ! "
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne !—
The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
And England's host has gain'd the plain ;
Wheeling their march, and circling still,
Around the base of Flodden hill.

Wight, Strong, valiant.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
" Hark ! hark ! my lord, an English drum !
And see ascending squadrons come
Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon :—hap what hap,
My basnet to a prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the Till !—
Yet more ! yet more !—how far array'd
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by !
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armour flashing high,
Saint George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly."—
" Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount, " thou'dst best,
And listen to our lord's behest."—
With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,—
" This instant be our band array'd ;
The river must be quickly cross'd,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
If fight King James,—as well I trust,
That fight he will, and fight he must,—
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry, while the battle joins."

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu ;
Far less would listen to his prayer
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep,
He ventured desperately :
And not a moment will he bide,
Till squire, or groom, before him ride ;

Basnet, A light helmet. *Stint in*, Cut short, cease.

Headmost of all he stems the tide,
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And, though far downward driven perforce,
The southern bank they gain ;
Behind them straggling, came to shore,
As best they might, the train :
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain ;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharm'd, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his men array'd,
Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a Cross of Stone,
That, on a hillock standing lone,
Did all the field command.

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host, for deadly fray ;
Their marshall'd lines stretch'd east and west,
And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation pass'd
From the loud cannon mouth ;
Not in the close successive rattle,
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
But slow and far between.—
The hillock gain'd, Lord Marmion staid :
" Here, by this Cross," he gently said,
" You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare :
O ! think of Marmion in thy prayer !—
Thou wilt not ?—well,—no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,

With ten pick'd archers of my train ;
With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain.—
But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
When here we meet again."
He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire ; but spurr'd amain,
And, dashing through the battle plain,
His way to Surrey took.

" —The good Lord Marmion, by my life !
Welcome to danger's hour !—
Short greeting serves in time of strife :—
Thus have I ranged my power :
Myself will rule this central host,
Stout Stanley fronts their right,
My sons command the vaward post,
With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight ;
Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
Shall be in rearward of the fight,
And succour those that need it most.
Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
Would gladly to the vanguard go ;
Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
With thee their charge will blithely share ;
There fight thine own retainers too,
Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."—
" Thanks, noble Surrey ! " Marmion said,
Nor farther greeting there be paid ;
But, parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
Where such a shout there rose
Of " Marmion ! Marmion ! " that the cry,
Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill!
On which (for far the day was spent)
The western sunbeams now were bent.
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view:
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
"Unworthy office here to stay!
No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
But see! look up—on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent."
And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke.
Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke;
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.—
Scarce could they hear, or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air;

Flodden bent, The slope of Flodden field.

Has fired his tent. When James saw the English troops advancing he abandoned his good position to seize another he thought the English might occupy. To cover his movement, he fired camp, the smoke blowing in the eyes of the English. But it also covered the English movements, and James gained no advantage at all.

O life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.
Long look'd the anxious squires ; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast ;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears ;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumed crests of chieftains brave,
Floating like foam upon the wave ;
But nought distinct they see :
Wide raged the battle on the plain ;
Spears shook, and falchions flash'd amain ;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain ;
Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly :
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight :
Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly, and with Home.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle ;
Though there the western mountaineer

Sea-mew, Sea-gull. *Badenoch*, In Inverness.

Rush'd with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword plied.
'Twas vain :—But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile, cheer'd Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell ;
Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky !
A Home ! a Gordon ! was the cry :
Loud were the clanging blows ;
Advanced,—forced back,—now low, now high,
The pennon sunk and rose ;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It waver'd 'mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear :
" By Heaven, and all its saints ! I swear
I will not see it lost !
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
I gallop to the host."
And to the fray he rode amain,
Follow'd by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made, for a space, an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose,—
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
It sunk among the foes.

Then Eustace mounted too :—yet staid,
As loath to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,

Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by ;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast,
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drench'd with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strain'd the broken brand ;
His arms were smear'd with blood and sand ;
Dragg'd from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion ! . . .
Young Blount his armour did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
Said—" By Saint George, he's gone !
That spear-wound has our master sped,
And see the deep cut on his head !
Good-night to Marmion."—
" Unnurtured Blount ! thy brawling cease :
He opes his eyes," said Eustace ; " peace ! "

When, doff'd his casque, he felt free air,
Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare :—
" Where's Harry Blount ? Fitz-Eustace where ?
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare !
Redeem my pennon,—charge again !
Cry—' Marmion to the rescue ! '—Vain !
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne'er be heard again !—
Yet my last thought is England's—fly,
To Dacre bear my signet-ring :
Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—

Dacre, Commanding the reserve force (of horse) in the rear.

Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie ;
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His life-blood stains the spotless shield :
Edmund is down :—my life is reft ;
The Admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or victory and England's lost.—
Must I bid twice ?—hence, varlets ! fly !
Leave Marmion here alone—to die."
They parted, and alone he lay ;
Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmur'd,—" Is there none,
Of all my halls have nurst,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst ! "

O, Woman ! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made ;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou !—
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
To the nigh streamlet ran :
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears ;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.

Edmund, Edmund Howard, Knight-Marshal of the army; son of the Earl of Surrey.
The Admiral, Thomas Howard, the Admiral of England; brother of Edmund.
Chester, Lancashire, The men from these counties, under Sir Edward Stanley.

She stoop'd her by the runnel's side,
But in abhorrence backward drew ;
For, oozing from the mountain's side,
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn ?—behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
In a stone basin fell.
Above, some half-worn letters say,
DRINK . WEARY . PILGRIM . DRINK . AND . PRAY .
FOR . THE . KIND . SOUL . OF . SYBIL . GREY .
WHO . BUILT . THIS . CROSS . AND . WELL .
She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied
A monk supporting Marmion's head :
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—
" Is it the hand of Clare," he said,
" Or injured Constance, bathes my head ? "
Then, as remembrance rose,—
" Speak not to me of shrift or prayer !
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare ;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare ! "—
" Alas ! " she said, " the while,—
O, think of your immortal weal !
In vain for Constance is your zeal ;
She———died at Holy Isle."—
Lord Marmion started from the ground,
As light as if he felt no wound ;
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents, from his wounded side.
" Then it was truth,"—he said—" I knew

That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
  Would spare me but a day!
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar stone,
  Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand."
Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling Monk.

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
And strove to stanch, the gushing wound:
The Monk, with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale,
  And—STANLEY! was the cry;
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
  And fired his glazing eye:
With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
  And shouted "Victory!—
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!"
Were the last words of Marmion.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their King,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward wing,
  Where Huntly, and where Home?—
O, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,

That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
Our Caledonian pride!
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
"O, Lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
And placed her on her steed,
And led her to the chapel fair
Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.
There all the night they spent in prayer,
And at the dawn of morning, there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their King.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,

King Charles, Charlemagne. *Rowland and Oliver*, two knights of equal prowess. When the rearguard of Charlemagne's army was attacked by the Saracens at Roncesvalles in the Pyrenees, Roland could have summoned help by sounding his magic horn, audible thirty miles off—*e.g.* at Fontarabia, where the vanguard was. But he refused, and the rearguard was wiped out. Such a blast might here have recalled the Scottish vanguard, who had broken away to plunder the English baggage.

Unbroken was the ring ;
The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight ;
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well ;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands :
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know ;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field, as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land ;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong :
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
And broken was her shield !

Short is my tale :—Fitz-Eustace' care
A pierced and mangled body bare

To moated Lichfield's lofty pile ;
And there, beneath the southern aisle,
A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
Did long Lord Marmion's image bear.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
Who cannot image to himself,
That all through Flodden's dismal night,
Wilton was foremost in the fight ;
That, when brave Surrey's steed was slain,
'Twas Wilton mounted him again ;
'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hew'd,
Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood :
Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,
He was the living soul of all :
That, after fight, his faith made plain,
He won his rank and lands again ;
And charged his old paternal shield
With bearings won on Flodden Field.
Nor sing I to that simple maid,
To whom it must in terms be said,
That King and kinsmen did agree
To bless fair Clara's constancy ;
Who cannot, unless I relate,
Paint to her mind the bridal's state ;
That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
More, Sands, and Denny pass'd the joke :
That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
And Catherine's hand the stocking threw ;
And afterwards, for many a day,
That it was held enough to say,
In blessing to a wedded pair,
" Love they like Wilton and like Clare ! "

Mounted him again, Brought him a fresh horse.
Hollinshed or Hall, English chroniclers.
Catherine's hand the stocking threw. Alluding to an old custom. On the morning after a marriage, the wedding-guests visited the house of the bride and bridegroom and threw stockings at them. King Henry VIII. drew aside the bed-curtain, and Queen Catherine of Aragon threw the stockings.

L'ENVOY

TO THE READER

WHY then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song,
Unless to bid the gentles speed,
Who long have listed to my rede ?
To every lovely lady bright,
What can I wish but faithful knight ?
To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true ?
And knowledge to the studious sage ;
And pillow to the head of age.
To thee, dear schoolboy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task, and merry holiday !
To all, to each, a fair good-night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light !

L'Envoy, The author's farewell to the reader, framing the poem.
Rede, Tale.

QUESTIONS ON *MARMION*

1. Contexts : *ad lib.* Paraphrase : *ad lib.*

2. Give a graphic account of a day at Norham Castle in the sixteenth century, imagining yourself a page writing home to a brother on a lonely farm.

3. Draw your conception of Marmion and his mount. Then describe them fully.

4. Give an exact description of (*a*) a knight's accoutrement, (*b*) a palmer's dress.

5. Describe the trial and sentence of Constance in the manner of a modern newspaper report of police proceedings.

6. Invent a story of how Constance is saved from the death to which she is doomed.

7. Describe the nocturnal adventures at Gifford as if you were the host and had secretly watched both Marmion and the Palmer set off for the Pictish mound.

8. Without looking at your book, give a full description of the appearance of the Lion King-at-Arms. Why was he so highly respected ?

9. Contrast Blount and Fitz-Eustace in (*a*) actions, (*b*) speech.

10. Summarize Canto IV. in one page.

11. Put in your own words, and expand, Marmion's reflections on the Scottish army.

12. How came the Abbess of St. Hilda's to be at Edinburgh ? How was she to return to Whitby ?

13. Either describe the quarrel between Earl Angus

and Lord Marmion, or turn it into a dialogue in present-day English style.

14. Imagine yourself about to be knighted in the ancient way. Give an account, as to a friend next day, of your vigil and the ceremony concluding it.

15. Outline the history of De Wilton (*a*) accurately as for a history book, (*b*) as Marmion would to King Henry VIII.

16. Trace the exact history of the forged letters. Imagine they are found, and supply their text.

17. In two columns arrange all the good and all the bad points you can find in the character of Marmion. Which column is the longer? What do you conclude?

18. Compose a report on the Battle of Flodden, such as Surrey might have sent as a dispatch to the King.

19. What part does Marmion play in the battle? Show the manner of his death.

20. Write (*a*) a page of description of a glimpse of the Battle of Flodden, (*b*) a page of a glimpse of a battle in the Great War.

21. Compose thirty lines in the manner of *Marmion* describing two aeroplanes, with machine-guns, in combat.

22. Arrange *Marmion* as for a cinema production, and compose the chief captions (or headings).

23. What touches of humour can you find in *Marmion*? Quote a sarcastic speech.

24. Tell the tale of Lady Heron's song.

25. Which canto do you like best? Which passage sounds to you the most warlike and vigorous? Which passage the weakest and most like chopped-up prose?

26. Collect five examples of metaphor and five of simile. Arrange them in order of effectiveness.

27. Collect about thirty old-fashioned and feudal-sounding terms used in the poem, and use them in a little account of two knights, their followers, a distressed damsel, a fight, and a happy ending.

28. Which characters in *Marmion* would you qualify as "sportsmen" or "sportswomen," and which have the makings of such, and fail? Illustrate from deeds performed.

29. Report any improbabilities in the story.

30. What advantages have we to-day over those days? What advantages had they over us?

31. Compare this story with the *Lay* in as many ways as you can.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

" So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
Field, feast, and combat, to renew,
And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
And all the pomp of chivalry."—Scott.

INTRODUCTION

I.—The Author

Scott had now made the Scottish Borders famous throughout the length and breadth of the land. Should he once more aim at public applause? A lady relative bade him be content—a failure might spoil his reputation. . . . Scott replied in the words of the great Montrose:

> "He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his deserts are small,
> Who dares not put it to the touch,
> To win or lose it all."

But he could hardly use the Borders again. Then where should he turn instead? From an early age he had paid visits to a certain Alexander Stuart of Invernahyle, Perthshire, one of his father's clients. From him he had heard interesting stories of the old Highlanders and their ways; and as many of the old customs still survived, he was able to piece out for himself the ancient life of the Highlands as completely as he had already done that of the Borders.

The district he chose in particular was that of a certain three adjacent lakes. To the east is Loch Vennachar, grandly bounded on the north by Ben Ledi; west of it lies Loch Achray, silvery and serene; and still farther west, approached by the wild and wooded Pass of the Trossachs, lies Loch Katrine, with its

succession of shaggy promontories and islets. It is against this background that the thrilling actions of *The Lady of the Lake* must be imagined.

It was a strange errand that first took Scott to Loch Katrine. A writ was issued against certain of the tenants of the land near the lake. "An escort of a sergeant and six men was obtained from a Highland regiment lying in Stirling, and the author, then a writer's apprentice (or attorney's clerk) was invested with the superintendence of the expedition. . . . And thus it happened, oddly enough, that the author first entered the romantic scenery of Loch Katrine riding in all the dignity of danger, with a front and rear guard, and loaded arms."

But in the summer of 1809 he made a deliberate study of the district; and to prove that Fitzjames could make the gallop from Loch Vennachar to Stirling in the time given him in Canto V., he did so himself. In the autumn he began on the poem, which came out the following year. Again he scored an astonishing success. Ellen's Isle and the Trossachs became a place of pilgrimage; and Scott had done more than any other man to start the modern fashion of going for holidays into wild and romantic spots.

Nor was the poem a pleasure only to scholars and bookish folk. Scott's friend, Sir Adam Fergusson, was serving at the time with the 58th Regiment in the Peninsula. When his copy of *The Lady of the Lake* arrived at the front, "he was posted with his company on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's artillery; somewhere, no doubt, on the lines of Torres Vedras. The men were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground; while they kept that attitude, the Captain, kneeling at their head, read aloud the description of the battle in Canto VI., and the listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous huzza, whenever the French shot struck the bank close above them." Sir Adam wrote to Scott, "While the

book was in my possession, I had nightly invitations to evening parties! and I must say that (though not conscious of much merit in the way of recitation) my attempts to do justice to the grand opening of the stag-hunt were always followed with bursts of applause—for this canto was the favourite among the rough sons of the fighting Third Division. At that time supplies of various kinds were scanty;—and, in gratitude, I am bound to declare that to the good offices of the *Lady* I owed many a nice slice of ham and rummer of hot punch."

It was his last great success as poet. Later works, in fresh settings, made no sensation. Byron was now the popular idol. Scott showed no disappointment, but, in 1814, began a new series of unparalleled successes with his historical novels, of which *Waverley* was the first. He made a fortune, was created a baronet, built himself a mansion—Abbotsford, on the Tweed—and lived the life of a country gentleman of unbounded hospitality. In short, no writer of English had ever been more famous, beloved, and fully rewarded. Yet success did not spoil him.

This was proved when he was faced with a most terrible calamity. For, when he was fifty-five, the publishing firm in which he had invested his money went bankrupt. His debt amounted to £130,000. Others would have accepted release from a bankruptcy court. He resolved to pay off every penny. To do this, he started a career of gross overwork, writing novels at express speed. It even seemed that he might make the amount, for in two years he had thus earned £40,000. But the pace killed, and in 1830 he completely broke down. A Government frigate was put at his disposal for a voyage abroad; he sailed, and rallied a little. On his return, however, he gradually sank, and died at Abbotsford on September 21, 1832.

The spirit of so noble a man breathes through his

poetry no less than through the best pages of his novels. Can you not feel his unselfish character and determined will when you read *The Lady of the Lake*?

II.—Data for starting on the Poem

The chief character in the tale is King James V. of Scotland. He was born in 1512, and succeeded his ill-fated father after Flodden in 1513. There was a regency, during which the nobles took advantage, and became dangerously powerful. When he grew up, the King had a stormy time curbing their power, but he largely succeeded, and earned for himself the popular title of King of the Commons.

Like his father, he was of a chivalrous, knight-errant disposition. Giving himself out as the Gudeman (or Farmer) of Ballenguich, he would wander about his kingdom in disguise, and meet with many an adventure by the way. The story of the poem is therefore not altogether improbable. Unhappily, like his father, he too fought against King Henry VIII., and suffered defeat (Solway Moss). Broken-hearted, he shortly afterwards died, December 1542.

Time: The six cantos of the *Lady* deal with the adventures of six successive days in the later years of James's reign, about 1540.

Place: The general background is one of lake, wood, and hill, in the district of the three lakes mentioned before. Later, Stirling.

In the opening scene, which R. L. Stevenson has described as "one of the most direct and spirited in literature," a stag-hunt is in progress over a considerable stretch of country within riding distance of Stirling. The chief huntsman, separated from his companions in the excitement of the chase, enters the Pass of the Trossachs, there to meet with strange adventures.

A map is essential.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

CANTO FIRST

THE CHASE

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade ;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouth'd bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
" To arms ! the foemen storm the wall,"
The antler'd monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dewdrops from his flanks he shook ;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky ;
A moment gazed adown the dale
A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,
A moment listen'd to the cry,
That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh ;
Then, as the headmost foes appear'd,
With one brave bound the copse he clear'd,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

Yell'd on the view the opening pack ;
Rock, glen, and cavern, paid them back :
To many a mingled sound at once
The awaken'd mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bay'd deep and strong,
Clatter'd a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices join'd the shout ;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cower'd the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint and more faint, its failing din
Return'd from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

Less loud the sounds of silvan war
Disturb'd the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern, where 'tis told,
A giant made his den of old ;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stay'd perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer,
Scarce half the lessening pack was near ;
So shrewdly on the mountain side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

The noble stag was pausing now,
Upon the mountain's southern brow,

Linn, Deep pool.

Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wander'd o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And ponder'd refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood grey
That waved and wept on Loch Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigour with the hope return'd,
With flying foot the heath he spurn'd,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambus-more ;
What reins were tighten'd in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air ;
Who flagg'd upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunn'd to stem the flooded Teith,—
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reach'd the lake of Vennachar ;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel ;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Emboss'd with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The labouring stag strain'd full in view.

Cambus-more, An estate two miles from Callander.
Bochastle, Stretch of moorland between Callander and Lake Vennachar.
Brigg of Turk, Bridge over the stream between Loch Vennachar and Loch Achray.

Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game ;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toil'd the bloodhounds stanch ;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

The Hunter mark'd that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deem'd the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barr'd the way ;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes ;
For the death-wound and death-halloo,
Muster'd his breath, his whinyard drew ;—
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunn'd the shock,
And turn'd him from the opposing rock ;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and hunter's ken,
In the deep Trossachs' wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couch'd, the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yell'd again.

Close on the hounds the hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanish'd game ;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,

Whinyard, A knife hanging from the belt.

The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o'er,
Stretch'd his stiff limbs, to rise no more ;
Then, touch'd with pity and remorse,
He sorrow'd o'er the expiring horse.
" I little thought, when first thy rein
I slack'd upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed !
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant grey ! "

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limp'd, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase ;
Close to their master's side they press'd,
With drooping tail and humbled crest ;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolong'd the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answer'd with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seem'd an answering blast ;
And on the hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day ;
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it show'd.

The day begins to wane, and still the huntsman pursues his way.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,

The hazel saplings lent their aid ;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down on the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurl'd,
The fragments of an earlier world ;
A wildering forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed.
" Blithe were it then to wander here !
But now,—beshrew yon nimble deer,—
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that ; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place ;—
A summer night, in greenwood spent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment :
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better miss'd than found ;
To meet with Highland plunderers here
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.—
I am alone ;—my bugle-strain
May call some straggler of the train ;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried."

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo ! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow-twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touch'd this silver strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood conceal'd amid the brake
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face !
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dash'd the dew ;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread :
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear !

A Chieftain's daughter seem'd the maid ;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betray'd.

Naiad, Water-nymph.
Grace, A goddess bestowing beauty and charm.
Snood, A ribbon tying back the hair, an emblem of maidenhood.
Plaid, The tartan outer garment of the Highland costume.

And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing.

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne :—
" Father ! " she cried ; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
A while she paused, no answer came,—
" Malcolm, was thine the blast ? " the name
Less resolutely utter'd fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
" A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar
Push'd her light shallop from the shore.
Then safe, though flutter'd and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a Baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armour trod the shore.
Slighting the petty need he show'd,
He told of his benighted road ;
His ready speech flow'd fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy ;
Yet seem'd that tone, and gesture bland,
Less used to sue than to command.

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wilder'd wanderers of the hill.
" Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home ;

Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pull'd for you ;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere
To furnish forth your evening cheer."—
" Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has err'd," he said ;
" No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand
I found a fay in fairy land ! "—

" I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light skiff approach'd the side,—
" I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore ;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight,—
A grey-hair'd sire, whose eye intent
Was on the vision'd future bent.
He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way ;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
That tassell'd horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be,
To grace a guest of fair degree ;
But light I held his prophecy,

Ptarmigan and heath-cock, The red grouse and blackcock.
Rood, Cross.

And deem'd it was my father's horn
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."

The stranger smiled :—" Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doom'd, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise,
For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
Permit me, first, the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
The maid, with smile suppress'd and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try ;
For seldom sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasp'd an oar :
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew ;
With heads erect, and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The dark'ning mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

The stranger view'd the shore around ;
'Twas all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain-maiden show'd
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen,
And open'd on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device ;

Of such materials, as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne
Of mountain fir, with bark unshorn.
An instant in this porch she staid,
And gaily to the stranger said,
" On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall ! "

" My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee."
He cross'd the threshold—and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rush'd,
But soon for vain alarm he blush'd,
When on the floor he saw displayed,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropp'd from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung ;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase.

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised :—
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length,
And as the brand he poised and sway'd,
" I never knew but one," he said,
" Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field."
She sigh'd, then smiled and took the word :
" You see the guardian champion's sword :
As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my grasp a hazel wand ;
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now and menials old."

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame ;
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unask'd his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names,
" The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James ;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil ;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning, with Lord Moray's train,
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripp'd his comrades, miss'd the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wander'd here."

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave ;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turn'd all inquiry light away :—
" Weird women we ! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,

Weird women, Witches, women of " destiny."

On wandering knights our spells we cast ;
While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."
She sung, and still a harp unseen
Fill'd up the symphony between.

SONG

" Soldier, rest ! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking ;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest ! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more :
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

" No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armour's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans, or squadrons stamping."

She paused—then, blushing, led the lay
To grace the stranger of the day.

Bittern, A marsh-bird, making a rumbling note like a drum.

Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

SONG CONTINUED

" Huntsman, rest ! thy chase is done,
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep ! the deer is in his den ;
Sleep ! thy hounds are by thee lying ;
Sleep ! nor dream in yonder glen,
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest ! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillé."

The hall was clear'd—the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread:
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head ;
Not Ellen's spell had lull'd to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes :
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake ;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honour's lost.
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recall'd the vision of the night.
" Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race ?

Reveillé, The call to arouse troops in the morning.

Can I not mountain-maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye ?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand ?
Can I not frame a fever'd dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme ?
I'll dream no more—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resign'd.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more."
His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consign'd to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturb'd repose ;
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawn'd on Benvenue.

CANTO SECOND

THE ISLAND

At morn the blackcock trims his jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day ;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mix'd with the sounding harp, O white-hair'd Allan-bane !

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reach'd the mainland side,
And ere his onward way he took,
The stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach

The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him, Ellen sate and smiled.
While yet he loiter'd on the spot,
It seem'd as Ellen mark'd him not ;
But when he turn'd him to the glade,
One courteous parting sign she made ;
And after, oft the knight would say,
That not when prize of festal day
Was dealt him by the brightest fair
Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
So highly did his bosom swell,
As at that simple mute farewell.
Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
He parts—the maid, unconscious still,
Watch'd him wind slowly round the hill ;
But when his stately form was hid,
The guardian in her bosom chid—
" Thy Malcolm ! vain and selfish maid ! "
'Twas thus upbraiding conscience said,—
" Not so had Malcolm idly hung
On the smooth phrase of southern tongue ;
Not so had Malcolm strain'd his eye,
Another step than thine to spy.
Wake, Allan-bane," aloud she cried,
To the old Minstrel by her side,—
" Arouse thee from thy moody dream !
I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
And warm thee with a noble name ;
Pour forth the glory of the Græme ! "

The Græme, The chief of that clan.

Scarce from her lip the word had rush'd,
When deep the conscious maiden blush'd ;
For of his clan, in hall and bower,
Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

The Minstrel strove to do as bidden, but, the harp refusing him a cheerful note, sounds of woe alone came forth. This omen took his mind back to former occasions when it had proved a warning of approaching exile for the family of Douglas, or even death. Ellen made light of his fears, saying jestingly that at least Sir Roderick Dhu would shield them.

The ancient bard his glee repress'd :
" Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest !
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled !
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew ;
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide ;
And since, though outlaw'd, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah ! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say—
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disown'd by every noble peer,
Even the rude refuge we have here ?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand ;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear ;

Dispensation. Ellen and Roderick were first cousins, and therefore could not marry without special permission of the Pope.

And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear,
That thou mightst guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread ;
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain !
Thy hand is on a lion's mane."—

" Minstrel," the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
" My debts to Roderick's house I know :
All that a mother could bestow,
To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrow'd o'er her sister's child ;
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed ;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan ! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
The hand that for my father fought,
I honour, as his daughter ought ;
But can I clasp it reeking red,
From peasants slaughter'd in their shed ?
While yet a child,—and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—
I shudder'd at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid, and sable plume ;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air :
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish ! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
To change such odious theme were best,—
What think'st thou of our stranger guest ? "—

" What think I of him ?—woe the while
That brought such wanderer to our isle !

Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe.
If courtly spy hath harbour'd here,
What may we for the Douglas fear ?
What for this island, deem'd of old
Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold ?
If neither spy nor foe, I pray
What yet may jealous Roderick say ?
—Nay, wave not thy disdainful head,
Bethink thee of the discord dread
That kindled, when at Beltane game
Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm Græme ;
Still, though thy sire the peace renew'd,
Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud ;
Beware !—But hark, what sounds are these ?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze.
Still is the canna's hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again ! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

Far up the lengthen'd lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four mann'd and masted barges grew.
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's banner'd Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spear, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave :

Tine-man. Archibald, third Earl of Douglas, was nicknamed the Tine-man, because he "tined," or lost, his followers in every battle he fought.
Beltane game, Celtic festival, on or about 1st May. There were bonfires and dances.
Canna, Cotton-grass (with downy bloom).

Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies ;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke ;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters down, and sweep
The furrow'd bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
Those shrilling sounds, that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.

The war-pipes ceased ; but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still ;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud a hundred clansmen raise
Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.

BOAT SONG

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances !
Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-green Pine !
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line !
Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gayly to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back agen,
" Roderigh Vich-Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe ! "

Chanter, The solo pipe (the others are *drones*). *Bourgeon*, To bud.
Roderigh, etc., O Roderick the Black, son of Alpine. The clan Alpine is probably the MacGregor clan.
Ho ! ieroe ! Meaningless sounds, keeping the time of the rowers.

The Dame call'd Ellen to the strand,
To greet her kinsman ere he land :
" Come, loiterer, come ! a Douglas thou,
And shun to wreathe a victor's brow ? "—
Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obey'd,
And, when a distant bugle rung,
In the mid-path aside she sprung :—
" List, Allan-bane ! From mainland cast,
I hear my father's signal blast.
Be ours," she cried, " the skiff to guide,
And waft him from the mountain side."
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright
She darted to her shallop light,
And, eagerly while Roderick scann'd,
For her dear form, his mother's band,
The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

Ellen and Allan-bane give welcome to the Douglas and the Græme.

Of stature tall, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
Train'd to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy :
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith ;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe,
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though wing'd with fear,
Outstripp'd in speed the mountaineer :
Right up Ben Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
And bards, who saw his features bold,
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown

Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, "O my sire!" did Ellen say,
"Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late return'd? And why"—
The rest was in her speaking eye.
"My child, the chase I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I stray'd,
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
Nor stray'd I safe; for, all around,
Hunters and horsemen scour'd the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risk'd life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood,
Guided my steps, not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Redden'd at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Fail'd aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day;
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seem'd toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made,
Ere he assembled round the flame,

His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen, too ; then cast around
His eyes, then fix'd them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he play'd,
Then raised his haughty brow, and said :—

" List all !—The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To share their monarch's silvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared ;
And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side ;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes ; his end the same,
The same pretext of silvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye,
By fate of Border chivalry ?
Yet more ; amid Glenfinlas green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen."

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turn'd their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire—that to her son.
The hasty colour went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme ;

Braes, Hill slopes.

But from his glance it well appear'd,
'Twas but for Ellen that he fear'd ;
While, sorrowful, but undismay'd,
The Douglas thus his counsel said :—
" Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er ;
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower ;
For well thou know'st, at this grey head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek, apart,
The refuge of some forest cell,
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor,
The stern pursuit be pass'd and o'er."—

" No, by mine honour," Roderick said,
" So help me, heaven, and my good blade !
No, never ! Blasted be yon Pine,
My fathers' ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart !
Hear my blunt speech : Grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid ;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow ;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief.

Bleeding Heart, Crest of the Douglas family. King Robert Bruce, on his death-bed, begged Lord James Douglas to carry his heart to the Holy Land. On his way Douglas fell in battle against the Saracens in Spain. The heart was brought back to Scotland, and buried in Melrose Abbey.

A thousand villages in flames
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!
—Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heart might say.—
Small need of inroad, or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foil'd king, from pathless glen,
Shall bootless turn him home agen."

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower.
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow?—
Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawn'd around,
By crossing terrors wildly toss'd,
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
To buy his safety with her hand.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas mark'd the hectic strife,
Where death seem'd combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rush'd the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
"Roderick, enough! enough!" he cried,

Bootless, With nothing to the good.

" My daughter cannot be thy bride ;
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be—forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
Will level a rebellious spear.
'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand ;
I see him yet, the princely boy !
Not Ellen more my pride and joy ;
I love him still, despite my wrongs,
By hasty wrath, and slanderous tongues.
O seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined."

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode ;
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darken'd brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seem'd, by the torch's gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim's way :
But, unrequited Love ! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenom'd smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes, that mock'd at tears before,
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherish'd hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its chequer'd shroud,
While every sob—so mute were all—
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook ;

She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
As flashes flame through sable smoke,
Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid :
" Back, beardless boy ! " he sternly said,
" Back, minion ! hold'st thou thus at naught
The lesson I so lately taught ?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
Thank thou for punishment delay'd."
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
" Perish my name, if aught afford
Its Chieftain safety save his sword ! "
Thus as they strove, their desperate hand
Gripped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been—but Douglas rose,
And thrust between the struggling foes
His giant strength :—" Chieftains, forego
I hold the first who strikes, my foe.—
Madmen, forbear your frantic jar !
What ! is the Douglas fall'n so far,
His daughter's hand is doom'd the spoil
Of such dishonourable broil ! "
Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
And each upon his rival glared,
With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,

As falter'd through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
And veil'd his wrath in scornful word.
" Rest safe till morning ; pity 'twere
Such cheek should feel the midnight air !
Then mayest thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey, with his freeborn clan,
The pageant pomp of earthly man.
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes show.—
Malise, what ho ! "—his henchman came ;
" Give our safe-conduct to the Græme."
Young Malcolm answer'd, calm and bold,
" Fear nothing for thy favourite hold ;
The spot, an angel deigned to grace,
Is bless'd, though robbers haunt the place.
Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight as in blaze of day,
Though with his boldest at his back
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.—
Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay,
Nought here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen,
So secret, but we meet agen.—
Chieftain ! we too shall find an hour."—
He said, and left the silvan bower.

Old Allan follow'd to the strand
(Such was the Douglas's command),
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.

Fiery Cross, To summon the clan in emergency.

Much were the peril to the Græme,
From those who to the signal came ;
Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand.

He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword roll'd,
His ample plaid in tighten'd fold,
And stripp'd his limbs to such array
As best might suit the watery way.—

Then spoke abrupt : " Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity ! "
The Minstrel's hand he kindly press'd,—
" O ! could I point a place of rest !
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band ;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
Who loves the Chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honour'd Douglas dwell
Like hunted stag in mountain cell ;
Nor, ere yon pride-swoll'n robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air !
Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side."
Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steer'd him from the shore ;
And Allan strain'd his anxious eye,
Far 'mid the lake his form to spy.
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave,
Fast as the cormorant could skim,

Cormorant, A sea-bird.

The swimmer plied each active limb ;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD

THE GATHERING

THE summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue ;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kiss'd the Lake, just stirr'd the trees.
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush ;
In answer coo'd the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught ;
For such Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast ;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,

Cushat dove, The ring-dove.

She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

A heap of wither'd boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian, the Hermit, by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grisled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair ;
His naked arms and legs, seam'd o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That monk, of savage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose harden'd heart and eye might brook
On human sacrifice to look ;
And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
Mix'd in the charms he mutter'd o'er.
The hallow'd creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse ;
No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunn'd with care,
The eager huntsman knew his bound,
And in mid chase call'd off his hound ;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He pray'd, and sign'd the cross between,
While terror took devotion's mien.

Rowan, The mountain ash, of magical properties.
Strath, A valley.

'Twas all prepared ;—and from the rock,
A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
Down his clogg'd beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
A slender crosslet form'd with care,
A cubit's length in measure due ;
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
The Cross, thus form'd, he held on high,
With wasted hand, and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he spoke.
" Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear !
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home, the refuge of his fear,
A kindred fate shall know ;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
And infamy and woe."
Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
Answering, with imprecation dread,

Cubit, Eighteen inches (the length from elbow to middle-finger tip).
Inch-Cailliach, Island in Loch Lomond, burial-place of the clan. (Isle of Nuns, or Old Women.)
Goss-hawk, Goose-hawk, the hawk that flies at big game, such as geese.

" Sunk be his home in embers red !
And cursed be the meanest shed
That e'er shall hide the houseless head,
We doom to want and woe ! "

The crosslet's points of sparkling wood
He quench'd among the bubbling blood,
And, as again the sign he rear'd,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard :
" When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed !
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed !
May ravens tear the careless eyes,
Wolves make the coward heart their prize !
As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth !
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark,
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside ! "

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took :
" Speed, Malise, speed ! " he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave.
" The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed ! "
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew ;
High stood the henchman on the prow ;
So rapidly the bargemen row,
The bubbles, where they launch'd the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had near'd the mainland hill ;
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,

When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;
With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap:
Parch'd are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They pour'd each hardy tenant down.
Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;
He show'd the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamour and surprise behind.
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
From the grey sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequester'd glen,
Muster'd its little horde of men,

Scaur, A cliff or rock.

That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood ;
Each train'd to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

A various scene the clansmen made,
Some sate, some stood, some slowly stray'd ;
But most with mantles folded round,
Were couch'd to rest upon the ground,
Scarce to be known by curious eye,
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was match'd the tartan screen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green ;
Unless where, here and there, a blade,
Or lance's point a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times return'd the martial yell ;
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And silence claim'd her evening reign.

CANTO FOURTH

THE PROPHECY

Young Norman of Armandave stood sentinel at dawn "on a pass 'twixt lake and wood."

HARK! on the rock a footstep rung,
And instant to his arms he sprung.
"Stand, or thou diest!—What, Malise?—soon
Art thou return'd from Braes of Doune.
By thy keen step and glance I know
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe."—
(For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
On distant scout had Malise gone.)
"Where sleeps the Chief?" the henchman said.—
"Apart, in yonder misty glade;
To his lone couch I'll be your guide."—
Then call'd a slumberer by his side,
And stirr'd him with his slacken'd bow—
"Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
We seek the Chieftain; on the track,
Keep eagle watch till I come back."

Together up the pass they sped:
"What of the foemen?" Norman said.—
"Varying reports from near and far;
This certain,—that a band of war
Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command, to march from Doune;
King James, the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.

On distant scout had Malise gone. As in a relay race, the first bearer of the Fiery Cross handed it over to another, who bore it so far, and then did the like. So Malise was free to go scouting.

Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior's plaid may bear it out.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true ? "
" It is, because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity ;
The Taghairm call'd ; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew."

MALISE

" Ah ! well the gallant brute I knew !
The choicest of the prey we had,
When swept our merry-men Gallangad."

NORMAN

" That bull was slain : his reeking hide
They stretch'd the cataract beside,
Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy boss
Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.
Couch'd on a shelf beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents sink,
Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,
The wizard waits prophetic dream.
Nor distant rests the Chief ;—but hush !
See, gliding slow through mist and bush,

Taghairm, A kind of oracle.

The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
To gaze upon our slumbering bands."

MALISE

" But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid.
Not aught that, glean'd from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten Monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, see—and now,
Together they descend the brow."

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word :—
" Roderick ! it is a fearful strife,
For man endow'd with mortal life,—
'Tis hard for such to view, unfurl'd,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, my eyeballs dim,
My soul with harrowing anguish torn,—
This for my Chieftain have I borne !—
The shapes that sought my fearful couch,
A human tongue may ne'er avouch ;
No mortal man,—save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law,—
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fatal answer came,
In characters of living flame !
Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
But borne and branded on my soul ;—
WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE ! "—

" Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care !
Good is thine augury, and fair.

Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
But first our broadswords tasted blood.
A surer victim still I know,
Self-offer'd to the auspicious blow:
A spy has sought my land this morn,—
No eve shall witness his return!
My followers guard each pass's mouth,
To east, to westward, and to south;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
He light on those shall bring him down.
—But see, who comes his news to show!
Malise! what tidings of the foe?"—

"At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive
Two Barons proud their banners wave.
I saw the Moray's silver star,
And mark'd the sable pale of Mar."—
"By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
I love to hear of worthy foes.
When move they on?"—"To-morrow's noon
Will see them here for battle boune."—
"But, for the place—Clan-Alpine's men
Shall man the Trossachs' shaggy glen;
Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
Each for his hearth and household fire,
Father for child, and son for sire,—
Lover for maid beloved!—But why—
Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
Or dost thou come, ill omen'd tear!
A messenger of doubt or fear?
No! sooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,
Than doubt or terror can pierce through

Sable pale, A black stripe down the middle of the shield.

The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu !
'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.—
Each to his post !—all know their charge."
The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
The broadswords gleam, the banners dance,
Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.

Meanwhile the Douglas, in the hope of preventing war, sets off to surrender himself to the King at Stirling. Ellen, now on the mainland, suspects his intention, as he tells her to seek refuge (at Cambus-Kenneth Abbey) if he does not return by evening. To while away the interval old Allan-bane chants to her the ballad of "Alice Brand."

Just as the minstrel sounds were staid,
A stranger climb'd the steepy glade :
His martial step, his stately mien,
His hunting suit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
'Tis Snowdoun's Knight, 'tis James Fitz-James.
Ellen beheld as in a dream,
Then, starting, scarce suppress'd a scream :
" O stranger ! in such hour of fear,
What evil hap has brought thee here ? "—
" An evil hap how can it be,
That bids me look again on thee ?
By promise bound, my former guide
Met me betimes this morning tide,
And marshall'd, over bank and bourne,
The happy path of my return."—
" The happy path ?—what ! said he nought
Of war, of battle to be fought,
Of guarded pass ? "—" No, by my faith !
Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."—
" O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,

Kern, A light-armed soldier.

—Yonder his tartans I discern ;
Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
That he will guide the stranger sure !—
What prompted thee, unhappy man ?
The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
Had not been bribed by love or fear,
Unknown to him to guide thee here."—

" Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
Since it is worthy care from thee ;
Yet life I hold but idle breath,
When love or honour's weigh'd with death.
Then let me profit by my chance,
And speak my purpose bold at once.
I come to bear thee from a wild,
Where ne'er before such blossom smiled ;
By this soft hand to lead thee far
From frantic scenes of feud and war.
Near Bochastle my horses wait ;
They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
I'll guard thee like a tender flower."—
" O ! hush, Sir Knight ! 'twere female art
To say I do not read thy heart ;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track ;
And how, O how, can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on !—
One way remains—I'll tell him all—
Yes ! struggling bosom, forth it shall !
Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
Buy thine own pardon with thy shame !
But first—my father is a man
Outlaw'd and exiled, under ban ;
The price of blood is on his head,
With me 'twere infamy to wed.—

Still wouldst thou speak ?—then hear the truth !
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth,—
If yet he is !—exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity—
Thou hast the secret of my heart ;
Forgive, be generous, and depart ! "

Hope vanish'd from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffer'd to attend her side,
As brother would a sister guide.—
" O ! little know'st thou Roderick's heart !
Safer for both we go apart.
O haste thee, and from Allan learn,
If thou may'st trust yon wily kern."
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made ;
Then, as some thought had cross'd his brain,
He paused, and turn'd, and came again.

" Hear, lady, yet, a parting word !—
It chanced in fight that my poor sword
Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword,
Whose castle is his helm and shield,
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land ?
Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine ;
Each guard and usher knows the sign.
Seek thou the king without delay ;
This signet shall secure thy way ;

And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me."
He placed the golden circlet on,
Paused—kiss'd her hand—and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He join'd his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way,
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

All in the Trossachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whoop'd loud and high—
"Murdoch! was that a signal cry?"—
He stammer'd forth,—"I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare."
He look'd—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed:—"Ah! gallant grey!
For thee—for me, perchance—'twere well
We ne'er had seen the Trossachs' dell.—
Murdoch, move first—but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!"
Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

They chance to meet with a crazed woman, one Blanche of Devan. She is a captive from the Lowlands. On her wedding day Sir Roderick had slain the bridegroom and borne her off to the hills, The shock had turned her wits. She now sings a song of "cruel guile," which the Knight suddenly realizes as a secret warning to beware of danger lurking around—

"The toils are pitch'd, and the stakes are set,
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

" It was a stag, a stag of ten,
Bearing its branches sturdily ;
He came stately down the glen,
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

" It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully ;
She warn'd him of the toils below,
O, so faithfully, faithfully !

" He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing warily, warily ;
He had a foot, and he could speed—
Hunters watch so narrowly."

Fitz-James's mind was passion-toss'd,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost ;
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.—
Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
" Disclose thy treachery, or die ! "
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrill'd in Blanche's faded breast,—
Murdoch of Alpine ! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need !
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind !
Fate judges of the rapid strife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life !
Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couch'd upon the heathery moor ;
Them couldst thou reach !—it may not be—
Thine ambush'd kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee !

—Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust ;
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain,
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die ;
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

She sate beneath the birchen-tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee ;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laugh'd ;
Her wreath of broom and feathers grey,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried,—
" Stranger, it is in vain ! " she cried.
" This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before ;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye
That thou wert mine avenger born.—
Seest thou this tress ?—O ! still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair !
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimm'd its shine.
I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head—
My brain would turn !—but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.—
I waver still.—O God ! more bright
Let reason beam her parting light !—
O ! by thy knighthood's honour'd sign,

And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!
They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell."

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
Fast pour'd his eyes at pity's claims,
And now with mingled grief and ire,
He saw the murder'd maid expire.
"God, in my need, be my relief,
As I wreak this on yonder Chief!"
A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
He blended with her bridegroom's hair·
The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet-side:
"By Him whose word is truth! I swear,
No other favour will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbrue
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
—But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
The chase is up,—but they shall know,
The stag at bay's a dangerous foe."
Barr'd from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turn'd back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couch'd him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o'er:—
"Of all my rash adventures past,
This frantic feat must prove the last!
Who e'er so mad but might have guess'd,

That all this Highland hornet's nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune ?—
Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
Hark to the whistle and the shout !—
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe :
I'll couch me here till evening grey,
Then darkling try my dangerous way."

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell ;
Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright ;
Yet not enough from far to show
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious step, and ear awake,
He climbs the crag and threads the brake ;
And not the summer solstice, there,
Temper'd the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze, that swept the wold,
Benumb'd his drenched limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famish'd and chill'd, through ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journey'd on ;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turn'd,
A watch-fire close before him burn'd.

Beside its embers red and clear,
Bask'd, in his plaid, a mountaineer ;
And up he sprung with sword in hand,—
" Thy name and purpose ! Saxon, stand ! "—
" A stranger."—" What dost thou require ? "
" Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chill'd my limbs with frost."—

" Art thou a friend to Roderick ? "—" No."—
" Thou darest not call thyself a foe ? "—
" I dare ! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand."—
" Bold words !—but, though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend,
Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapp'd or slain ?
Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure they lie,
Who say thou camest a secret spy ! "—
" They do, by heaven !—Come Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest."—
" If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight."—
" Then by these tokens mayest thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal foe."—
" Enough, enough ; sit down and share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare."

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The harden'd flesh of mountain deer ;
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his farther speech address'd :—
" Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true ;
Each word against his honour spoke,
Demands of me avenging stroke ;
Yet more,—upon thy fate, 'tis said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It rests with me to wind my horn,—
Thou art with numbers overborne ;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,

Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand :
But not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
Will I depart from honour's laws ;
To assail a wearied man were shame,
And stranger is a holy name ;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day ;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
As far as Coilantogle's ford ;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword."—
" I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as 'tis nobly given ! "—
" Well, rest thee ; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
With that he shook the gather'd heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath ;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down, like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH

THE COMBAT

It is dawn of the day following.

THAT early beam, so fair and sheen,
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,

Coilantogle's ford, Ford over the stream issuing from Lake Vennachar, to the east.

Look'd out upon the dappled sky,
Mutter'd their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain grey.
A wildering path !—they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales beneath that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky ;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gain'd not the length of horseman's lance.
'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain ;
So tangled oft, that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew.

They enter the jaws of a pass, and question each other by the way. The Gael asks why the other is so bitter against Roderick. Comes the answer :—

" Warrior, but yester-morn, I knew
Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Save as an outlaw'd, desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabb'd a knight :
Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart."

Wrothful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lower'd the clansman's sable scowl.
A space he paused, then sternly said,
" And heard'st thou why he drew his blade ?

Heard'st thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe ?
What reck'd the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath, or Holy-Rood ?
He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven."—
" Still was it outrage ;—yet, 'tis true,
Not then claim'd sovereignty his due.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life !—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruin'd Lowland swain
His herds and harvest rear'd in vain—
Methinks a soul, like thine, should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne."

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answer'd with disdainful smile,—
" Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I mark'd thee send delighted eye,
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between :—
These fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael ;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now ? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread,
For fatten'd steer or household bread ;
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
' To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore !

Not then, etc. During the Regency discipline was lax.

I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.'
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey ?
Ay, by my soul !—While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain ;
While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
But one along yon river's maze,—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true ?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."—

Answer'd Fitz-James,—" And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought ?
What deem ye of my path waylaid ?
My life given o'er to ambuscade ? "—
" As of a meed to rashness due :
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,—
I seek my hound, or falcon stray'd,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
Free hadst thou been to come and go ;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doom'd to die,
Save to fulfil an augury."—
" Well, let it pass ; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride :
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace ; but when I come agen,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,

As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band ! "—

" Have, then, thy wish ! "—he whistled shrill,
And he was answer'd from the hill ;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows ;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe ;
From shingles grey their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior arm'd for strife.
That whistle garrison'd the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood, and still.
Like the loose crags, whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fix'd his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James—" How say'st thou now ?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true ;
And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu ! "

Fitz-James was brave :—Though to his heart
The life-blood thrill'd with sudden start,
He mann'd himself with dauntless air,
Return'd the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before :—
" Come one, come all ! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I."
Sir Roderick mark'd—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood—then waved his hand :
Down sunk the disappearing band ;
Each warrior vanish'd where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood ;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low ;
It seem'd as if their mother Earth
Had swallow'd up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had toss'd in air
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide :
The sun's last glance was glinted back,
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green, and cold grey stone.

Fitz-James look'd round—yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received ;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied,
" Fear nought—nay, that I need not say—
But—doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest ;—I pledged my word

As far as Coilantogle ford ;
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on ;—I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu."
They moved :—I said Fitz-James was brave,
As ever knight that belted glaive ;
Yet dare not say that now his blood
Kept on its wont and temper'd flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonour'd and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanish'd guardians of the ground,
And still, from copse and heather deep,
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left ; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reach'd that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines

On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd.
And here his course the Chieftain staid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said :—
" Bold Saxon ! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See here, all vantageless I stand,
Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand :
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

The Saxon paused :—" I ne'er delay'd,
When foeman bade me draw my blade ;
Nay, more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy death :
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved :
Can nought but blood our feud atone ?
Are there no means ? "—" No, Stranger, none !
And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel ;
For thus spoke Fate, by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead ;
' Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife.' "—
" Then, by my word," the Saxon said,
" The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—

Lines, Entrenchments.

There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate has solved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand,
That aids thee now to guard thy land."

Dark lightning flash'd from Roderick's eye—
" Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu ?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate !
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate :—
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared ?—By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valour light
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair."—
" I thank thee, Roderick, for the word !
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword ;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell ! and, ruth, begone !—
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief ! can courtesy be shown ;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt."—

Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each look'd to sun, and stream, and plain,
As what they ne'er might see again ;
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dash'd aside ;
For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard ;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintain'd unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood ;
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And shower'd his blows like wintry rain ;
And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foil'd his wild rage by steady skill ;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

" Now, yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade ! "
" Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy !
Let recreant yield, who fears to die."
—Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,

Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung ;
Received, but reck'd not of a wound,
And lock'd his arms his foeman round.—
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own !
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown !
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel,
Through bars of brass and triple steel !—
They tug, they strain ! down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compress'd,
His knee was planted on his breast ;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleam'd aloft his dagger bright !—
—But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game ;
For, while the dagger gleam'd on high,
Reel'd soul and sense, reel'd brain and eye.
Down came the blow ! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp ;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

He falter'd thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeem'd, unhoped, from desperate strife ;
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appear'd his last ;
In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid,—
" Poor Blanche ! thy wrongs are dearly paid :
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that Faith and Valour give."
With that he blew a bugle-note,

Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet ;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green ;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
By loosen'd rein, a saddled steed ;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horse,—
With wonder view'd the bloody spot.
—" Exclaim not, gallants ! question not.—
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight ;
Let the grey palfrey bear his weight
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight ;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high ;—I must be boune,
To see the archer-game at noon ;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

" Stand, Bayard, stand ! "—the steed obey'd,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreath'd his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turn'd on the horse his armed heel,
And stirr'd his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sate erect and fair,
Then, like a bolt from steel crossbow

Forth launch'd, along the plain they go.
They dash'd that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew ;
Still at the gallop prick'd the Knight,
His merry-men followed as they might.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig Forth !
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look'd down.

Fitz-James, before he reached the castle's postern gate, remarked a "burly groom," whom he told De Vaux was none other than James of Douglas. They must be prepared against surprise.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey grey,
Now, as he climb'd the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself :—
" Yes ! all is true my fears could frame ;
A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate,—
God grant the ransom come not late !
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven ;
—Be pardon'd one repining tear !
For He, who gave her, knows how dear,
How excellent ! but that is by,
And now my business is—to die.
—Ye towers ! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled ;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound !
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom !

—But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.
James will be there; he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
I'll follow to the Castle-park,
And play my prize;—King James shall mark,
If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft, in happier days,
His boyish wonder loved to praise."

The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rock'd and rung,
And echo'd loud the flinty street
Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low,
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,
"Long live the Commons' King, King James!"

At the sports the Douglas won the silver dart for archery, the golden ring for wrestling, and the purse of broad

Jennet, A small Spanish horse.

pieces for hurling the bar. The King handed him the prizes coldly, and the Douglas, mindful of former days, grew exasperated. At length, when he beheld a royal groom strike his beloved hound Lufra, with one blow he felled him to the ground. All knew that none but the Douglas could deal such a buffet, and he forthwith revealed himself. When he was arrested, the crowd became riotous, for he was very popular. But he calmed them down, and passed a prisoner into the castle.

The King was in angry mood at this turn of events, but received good news of his forces under the Earl of Mar in their battle with the forces of Sir Roderick. So the day closed in.

CANTO SIXTH

THE GUARD-ROOM

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
While drums, with rolling note, foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barr'd,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deaden'd the torches' yellow glare.

Assembled there were mercenaries of many nations—English, French, Italian, German—drinking and making merry, or arguing over the various rumours of the fight in the Trossachs. Rough John of Brent trolled a catch. Suddenly a new source of amusement presented itself, their comrade Bertram of Ghent entering with two strangers, Ellen Douglas and old Allan-Bane, who were only rescued from their unseemly attentions when Captain Lewis appeared. Ellen begged him to procure her

an audience with the King, backing her request with the signet ring of James Fitz-James.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent :—
" My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face !
His minstrel I—to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care ;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase ;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse—
A doleful tribute !—o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot ;
It is my right—deny it not ! "—
" Little we reck," said John of Brent,
" We Southern men, of long descent.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me ;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see."

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they pass'd, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan, and fetters' din ;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
And many an hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,

By artists form'd, who deem'd it shame
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-brow'd porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward roll'd,
And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They enter'd :—'twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon ; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Deck'd the sad walls and oaken floor ;
Such as the rugged days of old
Deem'd fit for captive noble's hold.
" Here," said De Brent, " thou mayst remain
Till the Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then, the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growl'd anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head ;
The wondering Minstrel look'd, and knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu !
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deem'd the Chief he sought.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand,—
So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu !
And oft his fever'd limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,

Prore, Prow.

Yet cannot heave her from her seat ;—
O ! how unlike her course at sea !
Or his free step on hill and lea !—
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
" What of thy lady ?—of my clan ?—
My mother ?—Douglas ?—tell me all ?
Have they been ruin'd in my fall ?
Ah, yes ! or wherefore art thou here ?
Yet speak,—speak boldly—do not fear."—
(For Alan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.)—
" Who fought—who fled ?—Old man, be brief ;—
Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
Who basely live ?—who bravely died ? "—
" O calm thee, Chief ! " the Minstrel cried,
" Ellen is safe ; "—" For that, thank Heaven ! "—
" And hopes are for the Douglas given ;—
The Lady Margaret, too, is well ;
And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,
Has never harp of minstrel told,
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent."

The Chieftain rear'd his form on high,
And fever's fire was in his eye ;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
Chequer'd his swarthy brow and cheeks.
—" Hark, Minstrel ! I have heard thee play,
With measure bold, on festal day,
In yon lone isle, . . . again where ne'er
Shall harper play, or warrior hear ! . . .
That stirring air that peals on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory.—
Strike it !—and then (for well thou canst),
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.

I'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears !
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then,
For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soar'd from battle fray."
The trembling Bard with awe obey'd,—
Slow on the harp his hand he laid ;
But soon remembrance of the sight
He witness'd from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awaken'd the full power of song,
And bore him in career along.

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE

" I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far !
To hero bound for battle strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life
One glance at their array !
No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum ;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad ;
Scarce the frail aspen seem'd to quake,
That shadow'd o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirr'd the roe ;
The host moves, like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,

High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is pass'd, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trossachs' rugged jaws ;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

" At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
Had peal'd the banner-cry of hell !
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear ;
For life ! for life ! their flight they ply—
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued ;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood ?—
' Down, down,' cried Mar, ' your lances down !
Bear back both friend and foe ! '—
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levell'd low ;
And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
' We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game !

Tinchel, A circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding a great space, and gradually narrowing, brought together immense quantities of deer, which made desperate efforts to break through.

They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'—

" Bearing before them, in their course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below ;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurl'd them on the foe.
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash,
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if an hundred anvils rang !
But Moray wheel'd his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,
—' My banner-man, advance !
I see,' he cried, ' their column shake.—
Now, gallants ! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance ! '—
The horsemen dash'd among the rout,
As deer break through the broom ;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
Where, where was Roderick then !
One blast upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thousand men !
And refluent through the pass of fear
The battle's tide was pour'd ;
Vanish'd the Saxon's struggling spear,
Vanish'd the mountain-sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep

Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass :
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

" Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within,
—Minstrel, away, the work of fate
Is bearing on : its issue wait,
Where the rude Trossachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.—
Grey Benvenue I soon repass'd,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set ;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky view of vivid blue
To the deep lake has given ;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain-glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trossachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard the sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,
But not in mingled tide ;
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side ;
While by the lake below appears
The dark'ning cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shatter'd band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand ;

Their banners stream like tatter'd sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Mark'd the fell havoc of the day.

" Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxon stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried—' Behold yon isle !—
See ! none are left to guard its strand,
But women weak, that wring the hand :
'Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile ;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.'
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corslet rung,
He plunged him in the wave :—
All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
And to their clamours Benvenue
A mingled echo gave ;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer,
'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Pour'd down at once the lowering heaven ;
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
Her billows rear'd their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swell'd they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye ;
For round him shower'd, 'mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.—
In vain. He nears the isle—and lo !
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
—Just then a flash of lightning came,

It tinged the waves and strand with flame ;—
I mark'd Duncraggan's widow'd dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleam'd in her hand :
It darken'd,—but, amid the moan
Of waves, I heard a dying groan ;
Another flash !—the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

" ' Revenge ! revenge ! ' the Saxons cried ;
The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage ;
But ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and, from a crag,
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch's name, afar
An herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord, and Roderick bold,
Were both, he said, in captive hold."
—But here the lay made sudden stand !—
The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand !—
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brook'd his minstrelsy :
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand, kept feeble time ;
That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song ;
At length, no more his deafen'd ear
The minstrel melody can hear ;

Bothwell, The castle of the Douglas, in Lanark, on the Clyde.

His face grows sharp,—his hands are clench'd,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrench'd ;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fix'd on vacancy ;
Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu !—
Old Allan-bane look'd on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit pass'd :
But when he saw that life was fled,
He pour'd his wailing o'er the dead.

. . . . . .

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remain'd in lordly bower apart,
Where play'd, with many-colour'd gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful knight was near.
" O welcome, brave Fitz-James ! " she said ;
" How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt "—" O say not so !
To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas ! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live ;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's king thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lay his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come ! 'tis more than time—
He holds his court at morning prime."
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung :
Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whisper'd hope and cheer ;
Her faltering steps half led, half staid,

Prime, Early.

Through gallery fair, and high arcade,
Till, at his touch, its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A throngíng scene of figures bright ;
It glow'd on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue, fancy frames
Aërial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid ;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed ;
For him she sought, who own'd this state,
The dreaded prince whose will was fate !
She gazed on many a princely port
Might well have ruled a royal court ;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,
Then turn'd bewilder'd and amazed,
For all stood bare ; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent ;
On him each courtier's eye was bent ;
Midst furs, and silks, and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring,
And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King !

As wreath of snow, on mountain-breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay ;
No word her choking voice commands,—
She show'd the ring, she clasp'd her hands,
O ! not a moment could he brook,

The generous prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her; and, the while,
Check'd with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kiss'd,
And bade her terrors be dismiss'd:—
"Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask nought for Douglas; yester even,
His prince and he have much forgiven:
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamour loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided, and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern,
With stout De Vaux and Grey Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne.
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid."

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power.
"The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims,
And Normans call me James Fitz-James.

Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause."—
Again he spoke—" Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
What seeks fair Ellen of the King ? "

Full well the conscious maiden guess'd
He probed the weakness of her breast ;
But, with that consciousness, there came
A lightening of her fears for Graeme,
And more she deem'd the Monarch's ire
Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her sire,
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew ;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
" Forbear thy suit :—the King of Kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings.
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand :—
My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live !—
Hast thou no other boon to crave ?
No other captive friend to save ?
Blushing, she turn'd her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wish'd her sire to speak
The suit that stain'd her glowing cheek.—
" Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
And stubborn justice holds her course.—
Malcolm, come forth ! "—And, at the word,
Down kneel'd the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
" For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan,
A refuge for an outlaw'd man,

Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Græme ! "—
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

QUESTIONS ON *THE LADY OF THE LAKE*

1. Contexts : *ad lib.* Paraphrase : *ad lib.*

2. Describe the stag hunt in Canto I. as though you were the hunter who is last in at the chase.

3. Write a letter as from an hotel in the Trossachs, sketching the kind of country round you. Draw a map in illustration, and say how the place has changed since the days of Roderick Dhu.

4. Show that Ellen Douglas possessed a sense of humour.

5. Contrast Allan-bane with the minstrel in the *Lay.*

6. Compose a boat song with chorus, " Men of the oar, on to the shore, ho and yoho ! yoho ! "

7. Explain clearly and fully why the Douglas and Roderick are so troubled over the near neighbourhood of King James's forces.

8. Describe a day in the life of the Douglas on Ellen's Isle as if you were the Douglas talking to himself.

9. Trace the further history of Brian's omen.

10. Give examples of sporting and chivalrous actions in this poem.

11. Write an article on the Fiery Cross as if for the *Children's Newspaper.*

12. Suppose the need arose, how would you set about procuring further information on the Fiery Cross ?

13. Quote *three* sarcastic speeches. Show why they are sarcastic.

14. Why was Malcolm Græme in danger of punishment by the King ?

15. Describe the custom of the Taghairm ? How does it resemble a Greek oracle ?

16. Give three detailed examples of the way people dressed in the period.

17. Summarize the circumstances connected with Blanche of Devan and Red Murdoch.

18. How does Scott turn us against Roderick when we are inclining to like him ? Why does he do this ?

19. Arrange the chief characters in the order of their interest for you.

20. Describe a night on the hills in cold weather as if you had lost your way.

21. Describe the King's adventures with Sir Roderick Dhu as if you were the King.

22. What defence does Sir Roderick make of his forays into the Lowlands ? What would be the Lowlander's point of view ?

23. Keeping in mind the incident (Canto V.) beginning, " Have, then, thy wish ! " imagine a similar modern situation, and describe it.

24. Imagine the duel between Fitz-James and Roderick. Compose a dialogue as between two onlookers, who are powerless to interfere, and who take opposite sides.

25. Compose two four-line verses to convey the idea of a horse galloping ; and two others of a motor-car climbing a hill.

26. Write a character sketch of the Douglas.

27. Describe some incidents from your own imagination of the burghers' sports at Stirling, bringing out the wonderful skill of the Douglas.

28. Arrange the story for cinema or stage production.

29. Describe the last hour and death of Sir Roderick in your own words, and as graphically as you can.

30. Reduce Allan-bane's account of the battle in the Trossachs to a three-hundred-word report for a newspaper.

31. Show clearly how the story is brought to an end, and how each of the chief characters is disposed of.

32. Collect twenty examples of imperfect rhymes. Do they interfere with your pleasure in reading?

33. Collect words used by Scott to mean (*a*) boat, (*b*) sword, (*c*) hill, (*d*) headgear.

34. Of the tartan dress on Roderick's breast one reads "convulsive heaved its chequer'd *shroud*." Roderick refuses to "*lackey* . . . the *pageant* pomp of earthly man." Collect *ten* other instances of metaphors like this.

35. Which of the three poems in this book do you like the best? Which character? Which scene? Write a little essay on them.

36. How did Scott learn the scenery and customs of the Highlands? Why would they appeal to him?

37. Tell the story of Scott's own life after he had written the *Lady*. What sort of man do you consider him to have been? What sort of life would he have lived in the present day? Would his poems have been filmed?

38. What do you think was Scott's idea of a hero? What advice might he have given if you had been his son or daughter going out into the world?

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